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Govt-Oppn logjam breaks, LS session resumes

From Feb 2, the LS has been witnessing unruly scenes and repeated disruptions that led to the suspension of 7 Cong and 1 CPI(M) members

NEW DELHI

Signalling the end of the gridlock between treasury and opposition benches, the Lok Sabha on Tuesday afternoon took up a discussion on the Union Budget, which had been held up for days over the opposition's demand that LoP Rahul Gandhi be allowed to speak on a variety of issues.

When the House assembled at 2 pm after two adjournments, Krishna Prasad Tenneti, who was in the Chair, asked Congress member Shashi Tharoor to initiate the debate and the Thiruvananthapuram MP started speaking on the issue.

The thaw came soon after opposition parties submitted a notice to bring a resolution to remove Om Birla as Speaker of the Lok Sabha. Since February 2, the House has been witnessing unruly scenes and repeated disruptions that led to the suspension of seven Congress members and one CPI(M) member for the rest of the Budget session.

Apprehending unpleasant scenes, Birla requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi not to attend the House last week when he was to respond to the Motion of Thanks to the President's address.

Birla's claim that Congress members could create unpleasant scenes had further aggravated the stalemate between the government and the opposition.

'Rahul did not open Budget discussion to avoid 'engineered disruptions' in LS'

Several opposition leaders wanted Rahul Gandhi to open the Budget discussion as the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha but he suggested this could lead to "engineered disruptions" by the treasury benches and jeopardise the crucial debate, Congress sources said on Tuesday. They said Gandhi is likely to speak on the Union Budget on Wednesday.

Leaders of various opposition parties deliberated their strategy at a meeting of floor leaders with Congress president Kharge at the Parliament House complex this morning.

General Naravane breaks silence on book leak

NEW DELHI

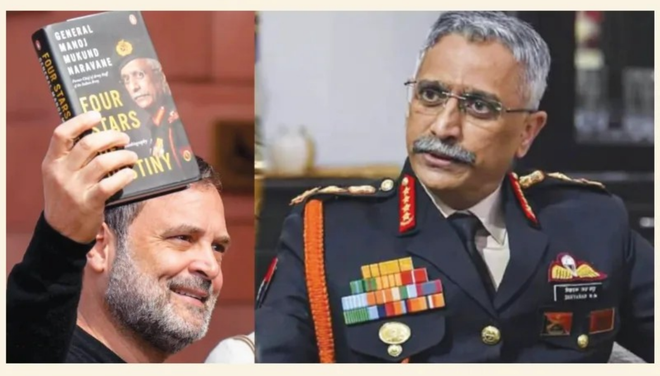
Former Chief of Army Staff General Manoj Mukund Naravane on Tuesday broke his silence on the controversy around his memoir, Four Stars of Destiny, sharing a post by Penguin Random House India.

"This is the status," General (Retd.) Naravane wrote on X, endorsing the publisher's claim that the book was never published and that no authorised copies exist.

The statement shared by Naravane was Penguin Random House India's first official clarification on the issue, which he had earlier reposted on Monday. In it, the publisher said it holds the sole publishing rights to Four Stars of Destiny and asserted that the book has not gone into publication.

Penguin said no copies of the book — in print or digital form — have been published, distributed, sold or otherwise made available to the public by the publisher. It warned that any copies currently in circulation, whether in whole or in part and across any format or platform, would amount to copyright infringement, and said it would pursue legal remedies against any unauthorised dissemination.

The clarification comes amid growing controversy over the status and circulation of the former Army chief's memoir. The issue has snowballed from questions over an unpublished manuscript into a political flashpoint and a police probe over its alleged circulation.



SET FOR 2024 RELEASE

The book was set for release in 2024, with bookstores taking pre-orders and readers pre-booking it online. The launch, however, was halted. On December 15, 2023, Gen Naravane posted on X that the book was available. "Hello friends. My book is available now. Just follow the link. Happy reading. Jai Hind," he had posted and attached a screenshot of a Penguin India post saying that the book can be pre-ordered.

Book was available for sale: Rahul

Citing Gen Naravane's December 2023 post, Rahul on Tuesday accused Penguin Random House India of lying and claimed that the book was available for sale. "Hello friends, my book is available now. Just follow the link. Happy Reading, Jai Hind. This is the tweet Mr Naravane made. Either he is lying, which I don't believe, or the Penguin is lying. Both cannot be telling the truth..." Rahul said.

Oppn moves 'no-confidence' motion against LS Speaker Om Birla

The notice was submitted after talks between the Congress MPs and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju failed to yield any results.

NEW DELHI

Opposition parties, led by the Congress, on Tuesday submitted a notice seeking the removal of Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to the Secretary General of the Lower House on Tuesday, following a meeting of INDIA bloc leaders chaired by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge.

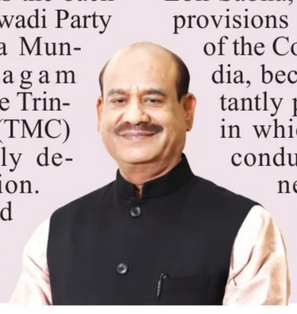
The decision comes amid continuing disruptions in Parliament, including a row over the Lok Sabha Speaker not allowing Congress MP and Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi to speak in the House.

A notice for the motion has been submitted to Lok Sabha Secretary General Utpal Kumar Singh by Congress Chief Whip Suresh Kodikunnil and Mohammad Jawed.

The notice was submitted after talks between the Congress MPs and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju failed to yield any results.

"A total of 118 MPs have signed the notice of no-confidence motion against the Lok Sabha Speaker," Congress sources reporters.

The motion has the backing of the Samajwadi Party and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), while the Trinamool Congress (TMC) has not formally declared its position. TMC leaders did not attend the meeting.



Why Opposition wants to remove Om Birla?

Opposition leaders alleged that Birla has been conducting the business of the Lok Sabha in a "blatantly partisan manner". They accused him of not allowing the leaders of Opposition parties to speak in the House. "We, the undersigned, hereby give notice of a resolution for the removal of Shri Om Birla from the office of Speaker Lok Sabha, in terms of the provisions of Article 94(c) of the Constitution of India, because of the blatantly partisan manner in which he has been conducting the business of the Lok Sabha," the Opposition's motion read.

RAHUL STAYS OFF NOTICE

The Congress and its allies have taken the rare step of moving a no-confidence motion against the Lok Sabha Speaker over alleged partisan handling of parliamentary proceedings. LoP Rahul Gandhi has stayed off the co-confidence motion notice against the Speaker citing parliamentary convention.

HISTORICALLY NO SPEAKER OUSTED

While there have been attempts in the past to remove the Speaker, none have been successful. At least two Lok Sabha members have to sign the notice to move a resolution for the Speaker's removal. Any number of members can sign the notice, but a minimum of two is mandatory. The Speaker can be removed from office by a resolution passed by the House through a simple majority. Article 94C of the Constitution has provisions for such a move.

Birla not to preside over LS until matter settles

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will not preside over the proceedings of the House until the issue relating to the notice seeking his removal is settled, citing moral grounds, sources said on Tuesday, as per agency reports. The development comes after opposition parties submitted a notice to move a resolution for Birla's removal, accusing him of not allowing Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi and other members to speak during the Motion of Thanks to the President's address and of suspending eight MPs. Article 96 of the Constitution bars a Speaker or Deputy Speaker from presiding over House sittings while a resolution for their removal is under consideration. The provision, however, allows the Speaker a constitutional right to defend himself in the House when the resolution is taken up for discussion.

Govt mandates 3-hr deepfake takedown rule for social media

NEW DELHI

The Central Government is tightening its grip on AI-generated and deepfake content, mandating that social media platforms take down objectionable material within three hours and making the labelling of AI-generated content compulsory.

The government has set a three-hour deadline for social media platforms to take down AI-generated or deepfake content once it is flagged by the government or ordered by a court.

Under the amended Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, platforms will have to ensure that any content created using AI tools is clearly and prominently labelled, while also requiring users to declare whether the content they upload has been generated or altered using AI.

The official notification also barred digital platforms from allowing the removal or suppression of AI labels or associated metadata once they have been applied.

The social media companies will be required to deploy automated tools to detect and prevent the circulation of illegal, sexually exploitative or deceptive AI-generated content, according to the MeitY order.

Zero tolerance for harmful deepfakes

The amendments impose strict obligations on platforms to prevent the creation or dissemination of unlawful SGI, including deepfakes that impersonate real individuals, non-consensual intimate imagery, child sexual abuse material, and deceptive portrayals of real-world events.

According to the government the new rules are aimed at curbing the misuse of AI and deepfakes online, while pushing platforms to act faster on harmful or misleading content.

MUST-FOLLOW RULES

- 3-hour takedown deadline for flagged online content
- Mandatory labelling and traceability
- User disclosure and platform accountability for AI posts
- Automated tools required for detection

WHAT ARE THE NEW GUIDELINES?

The new rules, notified on February 10 and set to come into force from February 20, formally bring what the government calls "synthetically generated information" (SGI) under India's digital governance framework. This covers AI-generated or AI-altered audio, video and visual content that appears real or authentic and may be difficult for users to distinguish from real-world material. The move comes amid growing concerns over the misuse of deepfakes, impersonation, misinformation and synthetic media for fraud, harassment and other unlawful activities.

DKS' Delhi visit for Assam polls: Siddu

BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday tried to play down speculations surrounding the 'change of guard' issue in the state, even as Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar left for Delhi giving the annual state budget meeting a miss.

Clarifying Shivakumar's absence from a key state budget meeting, he said the KPCC president and DyCM had written to him, explaining that he was travelling to Delhi to attend meetings of the All India Congress Committee related to the Assam polls. "A meeting on the budget will be held in his absence," he said, as per agencies.

'High command's decision final'

On leadership row, Siddaramaiah reiterated "high command's decision is the final one." "Why do you keep asking? If Shivakumar says something, ask him," he remarked, adding that he would not go to New Delhi unless formally invited.

DKS warns partymen against leadership remarks

Shivakumar on Tuesday said he has "no confusion" over the leadership issue involving Chief Minister Siddaramaiah as the two leaders have discussed the matter involving the Congress high command, and warned the local party functionaries against making any statements on the CM change subject. He warned party leaders and legislators against making remakrs on the contentious issue, reminding them AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge's earlier statement asking everyone in the party to "shut their mouth" and discharge the duties assigned to them.

Hindu trader hacked to death in B'desh, hours before polls

DHAKA

A Hindu businessman was brutally murdered by unknown assailants in Bangladesh on the night of February 9, two days before the South Asian country votes for its national parliamentary elections.

The incident took place in the Mymensingh district, where another Hindu man, Dipu Chandra Das, was also lynched and burnt. The victim, Sushen Chandra Sarkar (62), was a rice trader and a resident of Dakshinkanda village.

COURTING CONTROVERSY

Sarma files Rs 500 cr defamation suit against Gogoi

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday filed a Rs 500-crore defamation case against Congress leaders Jitendra Singh, Bhupesh Baghel, and Gaurav Gogoi. Sarma accused them of making "false" and "malicious" claims about his land holdings, which he said lacked evidence.

In an X post, Sarma said, "I have filed a defamation case seeking Rs 500 crore against Congress leaders for making false, malicious and defamatory allegations against me through a press conference." He added that he would not be intimidated by what he called political theatrics and propaganda.

He asserted that the era of "hit-and-run politics" is over and challenged the leaders to prove their claims in court if they have evidence.

The controversy began last week when Gaurav Gogoi alleged that Sarma and his family occupied nearly 12,000 bighas of land across Assam. Sarma promptly announced legal action, rejecting the claims as baseless.

Defamation row deepens political battle

The move comes amid escalating political confrontation between Sarma and the Congress. While the party has yet to issue an official response to the lawsuit, Gogoi recently intensified his attack, alleging that Sarma's remarks targeting Muslims and dragging his minor children into a controversy over alleged Pakistan links were "illegal". Sarma, who left Congress in 2015, challenged his critics to prove their claims in court.

SIT claims trigger political firestorm

Earlier, Sarma cited findings from a Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe claiming "deep links" between Gogoi, his British wife Elizabeth Colburn Gogoi, and Pakistani national Ali Tauqeer Sheikh, suggesting possible sharing of sensitive information with Pakistan.

Download apps only from official app stores: Cyber Crime Cop

MYSURU

"We are living in an era where artificial intelligence is making life smarter, faster, and more efficient. At the same time, it can also make fraud more convincing than before", said Cyber Crime Inspector Nandeesh Kumar.

He was speaking at a programme organised on the occasion of Safer Internet Day at the Abdul Nazeer Auditorium of the District Panchayat today. The event focused on smart technology, safe choices, and exploring the safe and responsible use of AI.

Inspector Nandeesh Kumar said that a large number of people are being cheated even on social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. Therefore, awareness about cyber crime, social media, and AI should be imparted to the public through various programmes, starting from the school level itself. "Personal information should not be shared on social media platforms. In recent days, links received through AI-generated reels on Instagram are being excessively forwarded, which is a growing concern.

The cop advised that apps should be downloaded only through the Play Store and Apple App Store, and that apps should not be downloaded from any other sources. Tamil Nadu ranks first in the country for having the lowest number of cyber crime cases, while Karnataka stands at fifth place. In recent times, cyber fraud amounting to ₹48 crore has occurred in Mysuru city alone. So people never to share OTPs or any confidential information. They must avoid excessive sharing online and making use of privacy settings in apps and on social media platforms.

Assistant Professor Shilpa said that users must be made aware of the internet and its safe and responsible usage. There is a need to promote good practices for cyber hygiene and to educate users about major cyber threats and mitigation strategies.

Citing a study by a leading industrial research organisation, she said that 90 percent of all cyber attacks occur due to human negligence.

She also informed that the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology is observing a nationwide awareness campaign on February 10, 2026, under the ISEA project, in collaboration with the National Informatics Centre (NIC) and other organisations across the country.

Administrative Deputy Secretary Savitha B.M., Development Deputy Secretary Bheemappa, Chief Planning Officer Prabhuswamy K.B., Chief Accounts Officer Siddagangamma, Cyber Crime Inspector Mahesh Kumar, taluk-level officers, and others were present at the programme.

No worry about drinking water till June: DC Reddy assures citizens

MYSURU

As the summer season has begun, Deputy Commissioner G. Lakshmikanth Reddy instructed officials to take all necessary precautionary measures to ensure that there is no shortage of drinking water in the district.

Presiding over the meeting of the District Disaster Management Authority held here on Tuesday, he obtained information on the availability of water in the KRS and Kabini reservoirs and said the quantity of water available in the reservoirs would be sufficient until the end of June. Officials of the Kabini Irrigation Corporation to ensure that, whenever required, water is released periodically through the channel from the Kabini reservoir to supply drinking water.

The DC instructed the Tahsildars to conduct weekly meetings at the taluk level regarding drinking water management, in coordination with officials of the Rural Drinking Water and Sanitation Department and the Taluk Panchayat Executive Officers.

With the onset of summer, the officials of the Forest Department and the Fire and Emergency Services Department must work in coordination and take necessary precautionary measures to prevent forest fires.

Referring to the fire incident reported last year at Chamundi Hill, he emphasized that adequate preventive steps should be taken this year.

Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer S. Yukesh Kumar said that villages likely to face drinking water problems should be identified in advance. Proactive measures should be taken instead of acting only after problems arise. On-and-off caps should be installed on water taps and stated that, if necessary, steps would be taken to drill borewells.

The meeting was attended by Mysuru City Corporation Commissioner Sheikh Tanveer Asif, Additional Deputy Commissioner Dr. P. Shivaraju, and officials from various departments.

National deworming day held at Kendriya Vidyalaya

MYSURU

The National Deworming Day celebrations, organised by the district administration, Zilla Panchayat, Department of Health and Family Welfare, and the District RCH Division, were inaugurated at PM SHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya, Siddharthanagar, Mysuru on Tuesday.

The programme will be held from February 10 to 16.

Inaugurating the programme, District Health and Family Welfare Officer Dr. C.P. Kumaraswamy said that every year several programmes related to mothers and children are implemented, among which the National Child Health Programme is an important one. Under the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK), several initiatives are carried out for children from birth up to 19 years of age. So far, consultations have been provided for more than 30 diseases, which have been broadly classified into four categories, he said.

Under the RBSK programme, Anganwadi children, children from government and non-government schools, as well as those covered by voluntary organisations, are screened every year through these programmes, covering nearly 8 lakh children. Widespread awareness is being created regarding anaemia or blood deficiency, he added.

With the objective of increasing haemoglobin levels among children, deworming tablets will be administered to every child. This will help curb nearly 38 types of diseases and also enhance physical and mental health, besides being beneficial during examinations, he said.

PM SHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya Principal Asharani Sahu said that February 10 is being observed as National Deworming Day. She expressed happiness that health department staff had visited the school to create awareness about deworming. Such information is very useful for growing children, she said, adding that not only students but teachers too should be aware of these aspects.

Officials present at the programme included District Health and Family Welfare Department officials Prakash, District RCH Officer Mohammed Siraj Ahmed, District Leprosy Control Officer Dr. Brinda, Taluk Health Officer Dr. Puttatayamma, Assistant Director of the Prime Minister's Poshan Abhiyan Lingaraju, and PM SHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya Joint Director Nagaratna.

Sinchana B.M., Kiran and Chandana Selected for All India Inter-University Women's Ball Badminton Tournament

MYSURU

Sinchana B.M., Kiran, and Chandana, students of Maharani's Women's Arts College, Mysuru, will represent the University of Mysore at the national-level All India Inter-University Women's Ball Badminton Tournament to be held from February 11 to 15 at Annamalai University, Dindigul, Chennai.

Sinchana B.M., a third-year BA student of Maharani's Women's Arts College, is the daughter of Manjunath B.N. and Savitha J. from Benaganahalli village in K.R. Nagar taluk.

Kiran, a second-year BA student, hails from Makavalli village in K.R. Pet taluk and is the daughter of Moganna-gowda and Shashikala K.S.

Chandana, also a second-year BA student, is from Mallahalli village in Nanjangud taluk and is the daughter of Siddaraju and Jyothi R.

The students were congratulated by College Principal Prof. Anita M., Registered Manager Sri Venkatesh K., Dr. Mohan Kumar C.S., Head of the Department of Physical Education, and Bhaskar K.S., Director of Physical Education. The entire teaching and non-teaching staff of the college also extended their best wishes to the players.

No power supply today

MYSURU

Due to underground cable installation work on the 11 kV Mayura and 11 kV Brindavan power feeders under the V.V. Mohalla sub-division, there will be intermittent and occasional disruption in electricity supply in the following areas on February 11, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Areas under the 11 kV Mayura feeder: Hebbal 2nd Stage, 1st to 8th Cross, Yajamana Circle, Chitra Residency, and surrounding areas.

Areas under the 11 kV Brindavan feeder: Mathura Nagar, Lokanayaka Nagar, Jayadeva Nagar, Hebbal Main Road, Metagalli Post Office, and surrounding areas.

The quarterly maintenance work scheduled by KPTCL at the 66/11 kV Rajivnagar Power Distribution Centre, which was earlier planned for 11-02-2026, has been postponed due to unavoidable reasons and will now be carried out on 12-02-2026.

As a result, there will be irregular disruption in electricity supply on the said date from 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. in the following areas:

Major areas affected: Rajivnagar 2nd Stage, N.G. Kareem Block, Gupta Store area, Al-Badar Circle, areas around Khuba Masjid, Suryanarayana Temple Road, Dastagiri Function Hall, Christian Colony, Nagarajappa Layout, Sadanand Hospital, Resham Udyog Hospital, Prajwal Hospital, Khaki-55, Abdul Kalam Layout, Ring Road, and surrounding areas.

Rise in mishaps: Urgent Call to Repair Dr. Rajkumar Road

MYSURU

The concerned citizens on Tuesday highlighted the deteriorating condition of Dr. Rajkumar Road, one of Mysuru's most important arterial roads and a key entry point to the city from Bengaluru and urged the authorities concerned to fix it immediately.

Speakers stressed that Mysuru, known nationally as a cultural and prestigious city, has several major roads named after eminent achievers, poets, kings and film personalities, including Padma Bhushan awardee and iconic Kannada actor Dr. Rajkumar.

It was pointed out that despite the significance of the road, the stretch from Kaveri Circle to the Ganapati Temple has been severely damaged for a long time, leading to frequent traffic problems and several accidents. The road serves as a crucial link for residents of densely populated localities such as Kalyanagiri Nagar, Vidyashankar Nagar, J.S.S. Nagar, Shaktinagar, Teachers' Settlement, Raghavendra Nagar and Vidyanagar, where a large number of educated and responsible citizens reside.

The speakers urged the government and concerned authorities—including MPs, MLAs, ministers, the district administration, the municipal commissioner and the Public Works Department—to immediately clear any legal or administrative hurdles and take up asphalting of the road without further delay. They emphasized that early repair of Dr. Rajkumar Road is essential to ensure safe travel for the public and to uphold the dignity of a road named after a legendary personality.

Report on the Genealogical (Anthropological) Study of the Gopala Community

MYSURU

It has been nearly six months since the commencement of the genealogical (anthropological) study of the Gopala community in Karnataka. To identify the regions where members of the community reside, information has been collected from senior anthropologists, sociology professors, community leaders, local public representatives and government research institutions. However, comprehensive regional data and precise residential locations of the Gopala community are yet to be fully identified. With sponsorship from the State Government through the D. Devaraj Urs Research Institute, a research team has been constituted under the leadership of Dr. Rekha K. Jadhav, Professor and Project Director, Department of Sociology, Maharaja's College. The team is conducting district-wise field visits across the State to collect region-wise data for the study. Community leaders, officials, researchers, elders, political representatives, anthropologists and sociologists have been urged to extend cooperation by sharing relevant information. Those possessing details about the Gopala community may contact the Maharaja's College office at 9986713964, 9008743464 or 9108467372, Dr. Jadhav said in a press release.

Print media still maintained credibility

MYSURU

even today, the print media has maintained its credibility," said Kollegal MLA A.R. Krishnamurthy.

Speaking at the 9th annual calendar release, award presentation and felicitation programme here, he observed that journalism is a very sensitive field and that journalists are doing the important work of conveying positive messages to society. However, this has now declined in the electronic media. Just as value-based politics is advocated, value-based journalists still exist even today. The media plays a major role in delivering quality news to the public. If everyone carries out value-based work, a better society can be built, he added.

Aandolana newspaper Managing Editor Rashmi Koti said that every sector is currently going through turbulence. In the race for TRP ratings, the electronic media has lost its credibility, whereas the print media alone has maintained trust. The role of genuine journalists is more important now than ever before. Public must act responsibly and refrain from forwarding everything that appears on social media, and work in accordance with their conscience.

Former Secretary of the Mysuru Advocates' Association S. Umesh said that genuine journalists are doing good work without intimidating anyone. However, some people are issuing threats in the name of social media and called for this to be regulated.

H.P. Jyothi, Professor in the Department of Social Work Studies at Manasagangotri, said that for building a healthy society, the field of journalism must remain strong.

Former Syndicate member of the University of Mysore, Dr. E.C. Ningaraj Gowda, said that people have lost the tendency to protest when problems arise, which is not right. He urged everyone, including students, to raise their voice against issues.

DCP K.S. Sundarraj, former Director of the Mysuru Co-operative Bank S.R. Ravikumar, and senior journalist Amshi Prasannakumar also spoke.

Dr. Amma Ramachandra compered the event, while Dr. Ambale Mahadevaswamy recited a poem.

The programme was presided over by R. Vasudeva. Vice-President Bhaskar, Secretary Vinod, Treasurer Naveenkumar, Yogesh, N. Madhusudan, Chidananda, Ravi and others were present. Dr. B.S. Dinamani welcomed the gathering, while Mariswamy and Sumarani anchored the programme.

Awards for achiever-journalists, felicitation of meritorious candidates

Journalists J. Shivanna, M. Mahesh Bhagiratha, D.N. Mahendra Devanuru, Nagaraj Navimane, M.N. Basavaraj, C. Dinesh, Vinod Mahadevapura, Satish Depura, Mohan Kayaka and Chiranjeevi Hullahalli were presented with the Rajasekhara Koti Memorial Highest Service Award. In addition, gold medallists and PhD graduates from the University of Mysore were felicitated. Students who secured high marks in the SSLC and II PUC examinations were also presented with merit awards.

Foodkits distributed to the needy

MYSURU

Mysore Gold Trust distributed food packets to 40 physically challenged and bedridden disabled persons who are economically backward and disabled.

City Gold Trust President Smt. Pavithra MP Trust Vice President Dr. P Shantaraja Urs. Sasikala. Grace Mary. Chandrakala Daniel went to the homes of the disabled and distributed food packets.

Activist Slams 'Cleanliness Marathon', Alleges Waste of Public Tax Money

MYSURU

Social activist Pramod Gowda has strongly criticised the city administration for organising cleanliness marathons while, according to him, failing to address basic sanitation issues in Mysuru.

He questioned the purpose of such events, alleging that public tax money is being wasted without bringing real improvements on the ground.

Speaking to reporters, Gowda said that instead of working sincerely for cleanliness, officials appear to be more focused on publicity and awards. Several public toilets in the city are either in poor condition or have been shut down, causing inconvenience to citizens.

Highlighting specific issues, he said the Pink Toilet has remained closed for the past three months, but authorities have allegedly turned a blind eye to the problem. "Officials claim these runs are meant to create public awareness, but the public is already aware. It is the officials who are not responding properly to public grievances," he alleged.

Gowda also drew attention to the lack of a single well-maintained public toilet in and around Devaraj Urs Road. He said this has caused hardship to shoppers, customers visiting commercial establishments, and workers in the area.

Further, he criticised the city administration for neglecting garbage disposal at several waste collection points, especially in areas without elected municipal councillors. He alleged that despite repeated complaints, no attention is being paid to the issue. He also accused authorities of failing to clear illegal footpath encroachments by vendors, which continue to inconvenience pedestrians.

Pramod Gowda urged the authorities to prioritise basic civic amenities and work with a clean mind for cleanliness, rather than spending public money on symbolic events.

Mysuru to Echo with Devotion: Grand Mass Hanuman Chalisa Recitation on February 14

MYSURU

The historic Maharaja College Grounds in Mysuru will resonate with devotion and spiritual fervour on February 14, when a grand Mass Hanuman Chalisa Recitation is organised for the welfare of the world.

Announcing the event, His Holiness Sri Ganapathi Sachchidananda Swamiji of Avadhoota Datta Peetham called upon devotees across Karnataka to participate in large numbers and be part of the sacred collective prayer.

Addressing a press conference at the Ganapathi Sachchidananda Ashram in Mysuru on Tuesday, the seer shared comprehensive details about the programme, describing it as a spiritual endeavour aimed at peace, harmony, and universal well-being.

A Sacred Gathering of Thousands

The special programme, scheduled for February 14 at the Maharaja College Grounds, is expected to witness the participation of thousands of devotees chanting the Hanuman Chalisa in unison. The Hanuman Chalisa, composed by the great poet-saint Tulsidas, is one of the most sacred hymns, encapsulating the essence of the Sundara Kanda and the entire Ramayana in a simple yet powerful form. A similar event held earlier at Tenali and nearly two lakh devotees had participated, creating a world record and demonstrating the immense spiritual strength of collective devotion.

Describing Hanuman Chalisa as a hymn accessible to all, Swamiji said it can be recited by people of all ages. Lord Hanuman is the eternal protector who stands by devotees during times of difficulty. This mass prayer has been organised with the intention of global welfare and the well-being of humanity. The programme gains further importance as it precedes the auspicious festival of Shivaratri. Lord Hanuman is an embodiment of Lord Shiva and the most devoted servant of Lord Rama. Reciting the Hanuman Chalisa during this sacred period, he said, yields manifold spiritual benefits.

The Power of Collective Prayer

Highlighting the strength of collective prayer, Swamiji said prayers offered together are far more powerful than individual efforts. Referring to puranic lore, he explained that before the incarnation of Lord Rama, 33 crore deities prayed together, following which the Lord appeared and assured the destruction of Ravana. In a similar way, when lakhs of devotees chant the Hanuman Chalisa together, each participant receives the spiritual merit of the complete recitation.

"Karnataka is the land of Hanuman. Devotees from across the state should take part in this sacred programme and receive the blessings of Lord Hanuman," Swamiji appealed. He added that he would personally be present, chanting along with the devotees. "May Hanuman's divine protection be upon everyone," he blessed.

The seer reiterated that when people come together in devotion, the spiritual fruits of individual prayers are shared by all, making collective worship uniquely powerful.

Explaining the choice of February 14, he said the date marks the auspicious day of the divine union of Sita and Rama, making it especially significant for organising the Hanuman Chalisa Mahayajna. Prasada will be distributed to all devotees on the occasion. Several organisations from Mysuru have joined hands to support the event, ensuring its smooth conduct and grand success.

STORM IN A TEA CUP OR WARNING BELL?

"Congress Factions Flex Muscles After Yatindra's Claim"

SHYAM SUNDAR VATTAM
MYSURU

A seemingly casual statement by Congress MLC Dr Yatindra Siddaramaiah has once again pushed Karnataka Congress into a familiar phase of political turbulence. Yatindra's claim that the party high command has given a "green signal" for his father, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, to continue in office till 2028 has ignited what many describe as a storm in a tea cup—but one powerful enough to activate long-dormant factional rivalries within the ruling party.

The remark has immediately energised groups and subgroups owing allegiance to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on one side and Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC President D.K. Shivakumar on the other. Within days, subtle and not-so-subtle shows of strength began emerging, with loyalists of both leaders attempting to assert dominance ahead of the crucial budget session of the legislature.

This sudden political heat comes after nearly two months of relative calm within the party. That lull followed a stern warning issued by AICC President Mallikarjuna Kharge, who had cautioned all warring factions to desist from public displays of disunity. Kharge had categorically stated that the high command had not promised the Chief Minister's chair to anyone and had urged leaders to downplay speculation and dissidence. His intervention had temporarily frozen the cold war between the Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar camps.

Even the recently concluded joint session of the state legislature passed without major embarrassment to the ruling party, as the focus of the House remained on other pressing issues. However, Yatindra's assertion has once again shifted attention back to the unresolved leadership question.

Reacting cautiously, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar chose restraint. "I will keep quiet. This order has come from Yatindra's high command," he remarked, a statement laced with sarcasm but devoid of confrontation. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, for his part, declined to comment, clearly avoiding further escalation. Other ministers have adopted a safe line, placing the responsibility squarely on the party high command to clarify the matter.

"The high command alone will decide leadership issues. There is no confusion," said one senior minister, reflecting the officially sanctioned narrative.

However, the reality is that the Congress high command is currently preoccupied with the ongoing Parliament session, followed by Assembly elections in five states. For the central leadership, winning at least a couple of these states is of far greater strategic importance than settling the simmering controversy over Karnataka's CM chair.

Yet, whatever the intent, Dr Yatindra Siddaramaiah's statement has undeniably ignited a spark. As factions mobilise and loyalties are tested, the political temperature in Karnataka has risen once again—reminding the Congress that internal unity remains its most fragile challenge.

Born Blind, Boundless Mind: The Lonely Journey of Karnataka's 'Super Human Computer'

SHYAM SUNDAR VATTAM
MYSURU

In a world that often measures ability by what the eyes can see, Siddu Laute has spent four decades proving that the sharpest vision lies in the mind. Known across Karnataka as the "Super Human Computer," Siddu's life reads like a story carved out of grit, memory, and unyielding determination.

Born in 1985 in Kakmari village of Athani taluk in Belagavi district, Siddu entered the world with congenital blindness. The condition pushed him to the margins of society at a very young age. Rejection, isolation, and neglect followed him not just outside his home but within it as well. Yet, even as a child, he refused to surrender to despair. Determined to study and achieve something meaningful, he left home at the age of five and moved towards Belagavi to pursue education.

School life, however, was far from easy. His slow pace of learning initially made him an outsider, and discrimination soon became routine. It was during his second standard that an unexpected spark changed the course of his life. Witnessing a senior student being rewarded for reciting multiplication tables up to 100, Siddu resolved to outdo him. Driven by a desire for dignity rather than applause, he memorised multiplication tables running into lakhs — astonishing teachers and classmates alike. Today, Siddu claims he has memorised tables up to 99 crore.

As he grew older, his exceptional ability to grasp and retain information rapidly set him apart. In high school, his consistent academic excellence invited jealousy. Some classmates even went to the extent of tearing up his certificates in front of him. Siddu chose resilience over resentment, believing that intelligence could not be destroyed by tearing paper.

His pursuit of higher education took him to Bengaluru, where the city's harsh realities tested him severely. With no shelter or support, he spent days on footpaths, battled hunger, and at times was forced to beg to survive. Help from a few kind-hearted strangers enabled him to complete his PUC, studying during long bus journeys between Bengaluru and Hubballi. He later joined M.S. Ramaiah College for a five-year LL.B course, where the institution extended a free seat in recognition of his circumstances and potential.

Now over forty, Siddu lives alone, disconnected from family but deeply connected to society through his work. He offers astrology and numerology consultations and counsels people battling depression, sharing motivational insights drawn from his own struggles. His memory reportedly holds over 45,000 mobile numbers, and he can instantly identify the day of the week for any date. He also holds the distinction of being one of the first visually impaired television anchors, hosting a programme titled Siddu Speech, earning awards and appearances on national platforms, including Sony channel and Kannada Koteeshwari.

However, the remarkable journey has hit a painful turn. Siddu is now battling a serious brain-related illness that requires expensive treatment. With limited financial means, he is appealing to the people of Karnataka for support. Siddu's life stands as a reminder that disability is not the absence of ability — and that even in complete darkness, the human mind can illuminate the world.

Playback singer Deepak Nayak unveils logo of VISTARA 2K26

MYSURU

The logo of Science Rostum's VISTARA 2k26 , a state level intercollegiate science fest was unveiled in a grand event by singer Deepak Nayak at JSS College for women, Saraswati puram, Mysuru on Tuesday.

On this occasion, the logos of the various fest events Vistara Pradarshini (Exhibition), Nakshatra Nartanam (Dance), Buddhi Vardhini (Quiz), Kala Vasthram (Fashion Show) and Punar Nirmana (Best Out of Waste) were also unveiled.

Deepak Nayak said that one should enjoy the competition without worrying about the results. Happiness at being part of the event and wished the fest every success.

Later, he entertained everyone with his wonderful songs.

Chief Guest Sushma Nanaiah, a serial artist and alumna of the college, felt nostalgic as she remembered her college days. She said that education and knowledge are important and students should have a clear goal to succeed in life. They must engage in multitasking and wanted them to make use of the opportunities.

Presiding over the event, B. Niranjanamurthy, Assistant Director. College Education Division, JSS Mahavidyapeetha, Mysuru, opined that, college festivals serve as an excellent platform to promote unity and foster a sense of harmony. The fest Vistara is an evidence of the enthusiasm, activeness and research spirit present in the students.

Dr. Rechanna, Principal, Sri. D B Yashwant and P R Rajeshwari, Coordinators of the Fest were present. The staff members and students participated in the event.

Kum.Vandana Vivek, II BSc, welcomed the gathering. Kum. M S Parinitha. I BSc. proposed the vote of thanks. Kum. Dhatri and Group rendered the invocation. Kum. Sahana Sangappa Havanagi, III BSc, compered the program.

The State-level Science Fest is scheduled to be held on 24 and 25 February 2026.

Kannada Vedike holds projects atop Chamundi Hill

MYSURU

Mysuru Kannada Vedike organized a symbolic protest condemning the District Incharge Minister, MLAs and MPs for functioning like puppets in the hands of the Chairman of the Chamundi Hill Authority, and strongly opposing the unscientific developmental works currently underway at Chamundi Hill in Mysuru on Tuesday.

Preserving the heritage of Mysuru is the responsibility of the government. However, the situation today is akin to the fence itself grazing the field. Chamundi Hill and its surroundings are forest areas, and any construction activity here must mandatorily obtain prior permission from the Forest Department. Contrary to this, the Chairman of the Chamundi Hill Authority is running a "Tughlaq-style durbar," while ministers, MPs and MLAs are dancing to his tune.

Despite protests and objections raised by Mysuru's historians, activists, environmentalists, members of the royal family and various organizations, the authorities have refused to relent. Under the pretext of constructing a prasada dasoha bhavan, money is allegedly being looted and the environment is being destroyed. At a time when incidents like those in Madikeri—caused by heavy rains and landslides—are still fresh in memory, it is tragic that construction activities are being carried out on Chamundi Hill even before the onset of the monsoon.

Although Mysuru has several eminent heritage experts, they are being treated as if they have no value at all. Not only people from our state, but even voices from other states are being raised against these actions. Despite all this, the continued silence of the District In-charge Minister is highly questionable. If the decisions of the Authority Chairman alone are final, then what is the role of elected representatives? The District Incharge Minister should resign, and the Chairman of the Authority should himself be appointed as the In-charge Minister.

Land grabbing has already taken place around Chamundi Hill, with houses being constructed unchecked, and there seems to be no one to question or control this. The Chamundi Hill Gram Panchayat has effectively turned into a real estate office. The Forest Department has completely failed in discharging its responsibilities. The number of wild animals has increased, and they are frequently straying from the hill into urban areas. However, the officials concerned are allegedly ignoring these serious issues and instead indulging in leisure activities at resorts with their families.

The access roads on the hill are collapsing in several places, yet neither the Panchayat Development Officer nor the Authority Chairman is bringing the ground realities to the notice of the government. Instead, they are encouraging unscientific construction works. Devotees visiting Chamundi Hill for darshan are allegedly being overcharged with the help of brokers, and are allowed darshan only after paying excessive amounts. There is a glaring lack of basic facilities for devotees—those climbing the steps are forced to struggle without drinking water or toilet facilities. Such problems seem to be invisible to the authorities.

On Chamundi Hill, it has now become evident that in any matter, the final decision rests with officials rather than elected representatives. Condemning all these issues, Mysuru Kannada Vedike organized this symbolic protest.

The protest was led by Vedike President S. Balakrishna, Naala Beedi Ravi, Bogadi Siddegowda, Gurubasappa, Sai Chamaraju, Palace Babu, Harish Chinnappa, Shivugowda, Madappa Sunil, Gopi, Guide Swamy, Cheluvarayaswamy, Honakere Kere Swamy, LIC Siddappa, Govindaraju, Beda Babu, Ramesh, Manohar, Nataraju, Raita Parva President Arun Kumar, General Secretary Dr. Umapathi, and others.

QUICK READ

Stick to Notified Ward Boundaries for Civic Polls: GBA Chief

Bengaluru

Ahead of elections to the five city corporations under the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), chief commissioner Maheshwar Rao has directed officials to strictly adhere to ward boundaries as notified in the official government notification, making it clear that no deviations will be allowed. The directive was issued during a review meeting at the GBA headquarters on the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for verifying draft electoral rolls of the five corporations. Rao instructed the IT department to update and rectify digital ward maps to ensure complete alignment with the notified ward descriptions. He also stressed that, in the long run, ward boundary verification should be undertaken through a systematic and comprehensive survey process to avoid discrepancies in future elections.

Winder Mary High School Hosts 'Nritya Kalanjali 2026'

Bengaluru

Winder Mary High School on Magadi Road celebrated its school anniversary, Nritya Kalanjali 2026, at the SJR College Auditorium, Gandhinagar. The event was inaugurated by T. Balakrishna, president of the Venkat, St. Ann's and Venus Group of Institutions, who praised the school's focus on all-round development and consistent SSLC results. School president Shiva Shankar urged students to believe in hard work and determination, highlighting teachers' efforts to guide students and parents. Former corporator Vidyashashikumar, T. Venkatesh, teachers and students attended. Colourful dance performances by students captivated the audience.

100 Acres Identified in Mandya for ARAI Plant, MB Patil Writes to Kumaraswamy

Minister MB Patil says Mandya land ready for proposed ARAI testing facility

BENGALURU

Minister for Large and Medium Industries M.B. Patil has informed Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel H.D. Kumaraswamy that 100 acres of land is available in Mandya district for establishing the country's first construction equipment and infrastructure testing plant under the Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI).

In a letter responding to Kumaraswamy's communication, Patil said that around 105 acres of government land has been identified within the limits of Muddanaghatta and Heggaditihalli villages in Basaralu hobli of Mandya taluk. The land, as reported by the Deputy Commissioner of Mandya district, is located just 500 metres from the Mandya–Nagamangala State Highway, offering strong logistical connectivity.

Patil noted that the extent of land available exceeds the requirement sought by the Union Ministry. He urged Kumaraswamy to direct ARAI officials and the Union Ministry team to visit Karnataka at the earliest and conduct a joint inspection of the identified site. If the land is found suitable, the State government would proceed with sanctioning it for the proposed plant, he said.

The Minister also stated that ARAI authorities could coordinate directly with S. Selvakumar, Principal Secretary of the State Industries Department, to take the proposal forward and expedite procedural formalities.

The proposed ARAI facility is expected to play a crucial role in testing construction machinery and infrastructure equipment, strengthening India's domestic manufacturing and research ecosystem while supporting the "Make in India" initiative.

Separately, Patil highlighted that he had recently met Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav to submit a series of requests related to rail connectivity. These included the sanctioning of a Vande Bharat Sleeper Express between Bengaluru and Vijayapura, introduction of daytime special trains on the same route, and the development of a high-speed rail corridor between Bengaluru and Mumbai. Patil met Vaishnav after the launch of electronics manufacturing by Jet Work Company at the Hi-Tech Hardware Park in Bengaluru, during which he handed over the petitions. According to Patil, the Railway Minister assured him that the proposals would be examined positively.

Emphasising the strategic importance of connectivity, Patil said Bengaluru, as the country's technology capital, and Mumbai, the financial capital, must be linked through the best possible transport infrastructure. In this context, he also urged that the proposed Mumbai–Pune high-speed rail corridor be extended up to Bengaluru to boost economic integration and industrial growth.

CM Siddaramaiah Holds Pre-Budget Meetings

BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah continued pre-budget meetings with various departments ahead of the 2026–27 State Budget. The deliberations are aimed at reviewing departmental requirements and setting priorities for the upcoming financial year. Earlier, the Chief Minister held a detailed meeting with the Energy Department as part of the exercise. The discussions were attended by Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh, Additional Chief Secretary Anjum Parvez and other senior officials from the Finance Department. The series of meetings is expected to shape policy focus and budgetary allocations across key sectors.

Lake Drained for ₹18-Cr Rejuvenation Works

BENGALURU

Lumbini Garden shut as Nagawara Lake emptied for desilting, restoration activities

GBA officials assured that Nagawara Lake and Lumbini Garden will be reopened to the public once the rejuvenation works are completed. They said the lake will return with a refreshed appearance, improved ecology and better amenities for visitors. Until then, public entry will remain restricted in the interest of safety.

Bengaluru's historic and popular tourist destination, Lumbini Garden, has been temporarily closed after Nagawara Lake was completely drained to facilitate desilting and rejuvenation works, catching visitors and nearby residents by surprise.

Residents said the lake had water barely a week ago, making the overnight transformation into a dry lake bed shocking. The sudden closure of the garden, with no visible public notice, triggered confusion and concern among regular visitors. For many locals, the shutdown has revived memories of the long closure during the COVID-19 period, after which the garden remained inaccessible for nearly six years.

"This place used to be a favourite spot for families and children. We came here for recreation and play. Seeing it closed again is upsetting," said a resident living nearby. Several others said they were unaware of the reasons behind the draining of the lake and feared it could cause long-term ecological damage.

Responding to the concerns, officials of the Garden City of Bengaluru Authority (GBA) clarified that the lake had been intentionally drained as part of a planned restoration project. They said the closure is temporary and aimed at improving the overall health and sustainability of the lake ecosystem.

According to officials, desilting work is currently underway to remove the accumulated sludge from the lake bed. In addition, inflow and outflow channels are being upgraded to ensure better water circulation and prevent stagnation once the lake is refilled. The project also includes strengthening of embankments and other structural improvements within the lake area.

Authorities said comprehensive development activities at Lumbini Garden are expected to take around 15 days. The total cost of the rejuvenation and development project has been estimated at ₹18 crore, covering lake restoration as well as improvements to visitor facilities within the garden.

The lake water was completely released to allow heavy machinery access for cleaning and structural works, officials explained, adding that such measures were necessary for long-term revival rather than cosmetic beautification.

Progress Review Meeting on Road Widening and Land Acquisition

BENGALURU

Additional Commissioner (Development) of the Bengaluru East City Municipal Corporation, Lokhande Snehal Sudhakar, on Tuesday conducted a progress review meeting on land acquisition processes required for the development and widening of major roads within the City Corporation limits. During the meeting, she issued clear directions to concerned officials to expedite procedures and remove bottlenecks affecting key infrastructure projects.

As per the Revised Master Plan–2015, a proposal is in place to develop a 24-metre-wide road from the Outer Ring Road, passing through Seetharampalya, up to the Sathya Sai Hospital. In the first phase, officials were instructed to issue land acquisition notifications for road widening along a stretch of about 2.2 km from the Outer Ring Road to Seetharampalya Lake.

The Additional Commissioner also directed officials to take immediate steps to fully open the Bagmane Tech Park Road for public traffic, ensuring smoother connectivity and easing congestion in the area.

Further instructions were issued to take possession of land that has already been relinquished for public use. Officials were asked to install name boards clearly identifying such parcels as City Corporation property and to carry out eviction drives to remove encroachments along Swami Vivekananda Road.

In another major road project, the Old Airport Road–Siddapura–Nallurahalli Road has been designated as an 18-metre-wide road under the Revised Master Plan–2015. Officials were instructed to fast-track the land acquisition process required for widening a stretch of approximately 1.5 km along this corridor.

During a joint inspection earlier, Chief Engineer M. Lokesh, BDA Executive Engineer Yashwanth, Executive Engineer Munireddy, Assistant Executive Engineers, engineers from the Bangalore Development Authority and BWSSB, officials from the Solid Waste Management Department, and consultants were present.

The progress review meeting chaired by the Additional Commissioner was attended by Executive Engineer T.C. Ravikumar, Assistant Executive Engineers, Assistant Engineers from the TDR Division, Assistant Directors (Land Survey), and other concerned officials, who were asked to ensure timely coordination and compliance.

Coordinate with BDA to Take Over Varthur Lake by City Corporation: DS Ramesh

BENGALURU

Commissioner of the Bengaluru East City Corporation, D.S. Ramesh, on Tuesday directed officials to coordinate with the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) to initiate the process of handing over Varthur Lake to the City Corporation. The instruction came during a joint inspection conducted to review the status of rejuvenation works at Bellandur and Varthur lakes and to ensure inter-departmental coordination to prevent sewage inflow.

The inspection was carried out with engineers from the City Corporation, BDA, Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) and officials from the Solid Waste Management Department. At Bellandur Lake, which is currently maintained by the BDA, the Commissioner reviewed the ongoing desilting works and instructed

officials to complete the removal of the entire silt on a priority basis before the onset of the monsoon.

The lake's boundary and compound walls were also inspected, and officials provided detailed information on encroachments. Ramesh directed that necessary steps be taken to remove encroachments and safeguard the lake area. He also stressed the importance of ensuring proper maintenance of all lake inlets and outlets to prevent contamination.

Reviewing the overall lake rejuvenation and development activities, the Commissioner instructed departments to complete priority works at the earliest. At Varthur Lake, officials informed him that rejuvenation works have already been completed. The lake bund, inlets, boundary fencing and sluice gates were inspected to assess their condition and maintenance.

However, it was observed that the lake surface is fully covered with weeds. Ramesh instructed officials to take immediate steps to remove the weeds to improve water quality and aesthetics. BWSSB officials briefed the Commissioner on the inflow of treated water from sewage treatment plants into the lake.

City Corporation officials were directed to submit a detailed report within a week on the coordination with the BDA and the formal handover process of Varthur Lake to the City Corporation, enabling its long-term maintenance and management.

Development is always in progress: MLA S.T. Somashekar

BENGALURU

MLA S.T. Somashekar said that every village can move towards progress only when development activities are carried out on a continuous basis. He was speaking after inaugurating the construction of a wire fence and compound wall at the Hindu Rudrabhoomi in Kannali village under the Kodigehalli Gram Panchayat in the Yeshwantpur Assembly constituency. He also inaugurated the construction of concrete roads and drainage works in Hosahalli, Veerabhadra Swamy Layout and Papanna Layout.

Somashekar said that providing basic infrastructure and civic amenities in villages under the Gram Panchayat would enable residents to lead secure and prosperous lives. He stressed that development should reach all sections of society without discrimination and that sustained efforts were

essential for overall growth.

He added that when people's representatives serve the public fairly and honestly, without any party bias, their work would be remembered by the people for a long time. Development, he said, should be guided by public interest and transparency.

Kodigehalli Gram Panchayat President Vinod Narasimha Murthy said that the development of rural areas was key to the development of the country.

He noted that Kodigehalli Gram Panchayat had been able to undertake several development initiatives due to the support, guidance and grants provided by MLA S.T. Somashekar. Murthy said that during his tenure, sincere efforts had been made to improve infrastructure and living conditions in areas under the Gram Panchayat's jurisdiction. Several village-level works had been taken up with the aim of ensuring long-term benefits for residents.

Kodigehalli Gram Panchayat members Kumaraswamy, Ward President Nagaraj, Nandana Mahesh, Srinivas, Uma and others were present at the programme.

K'taka expands build limits for industrial plots

BENGALURU

To improve land utilisation and attract fresh investment, the Karnataka government has approved a major expansion of built-up limits on industrial plots, especially those developed by KIADB. Permissible ground coverage has been increased from 65% to 75%, easing long-standing industry concerns over underutilised land. Industries Minister M.B. Patil said the change would help optimise existing plots without expanding land holdings. The government has also raised the maximum permissible Floor Area Ratio (FAR) under a premium payment system. FAR can now go up to 5.2 for plots along roads wider than 30 metres, with graded limits for narrower roads. Industry bodies welcomed the move, saying it would support flatted factories and benefit MSMEs.

QUICK FACILITY FOR STUDENTS

From Paper to Portal, Rural Certificates to Be Brought Under Sakala Services

BENGALURU

In a move expected to bring major relief to thousands of Common Entrance Test (CET) aspirants, the Department of School Education and Literacy is planning to digitise the issuance of study certificates, Kannada medium certificates and rural study certificates by bringing them under the Sakala services framework.

At present, the process of obtaining these certificates is entirely offline and manual. Students are required to approach each school they studied in, submit applications at multiple levels and obtain verifications from school headmasters and Block Education Officers (BEOs). Since verification is carried out manually on a school-by-school basis, applicants often face delays, repeated visits to government offices and uncertainty, particularly during the peak admission season.

To address these issues, the department is now working on a fully online and automated system. Under the proposed model, students will be able to submit a single consolidated application covering all the schools they have attended. Once issued, the certificates will be linked to the Aadhaar vault and stored in a central digital repository, ensuring faster access, improved transparency and a significant reduction in administrative workload.

These services will be brought under the Sakala framework and made available through the Seva Sindhu portal. Once an application is submitted, the certificates will be issued within seven days.

"The system is timely and is expected to provide significant relief to students appearing for the CET," said Rashmi V. Mahesh, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy.

She noted that Karnataka's disjointed schooling system — with primary, higher primary, high schools and PU colleges functioning independently — had forced students to shuttle between four or five institutions to obtain study certificates. "Once the new system is in place, there will be minimal delay and human intervention. The process will be seamless, with applications received through Seva Sindhu and moved digitally to the respective schools and BEOs," she said.

Under the new system, once an application is submitted online, data will be auto-populated from the Student Achievement Tracking System. Verification will then be carried out digitally by the school headmaster and, in the case of private institutions, by the concerned BEO.

The project is expected to be rolled out within a month. Officials said certificates such as study certificates, Kannada medium certificates, linguistic minority certificates and rural study certificates play a crucial role in higher education admissions, employment opportunities and access to reservation quotas.

With the certificates available through DigiLocker, students will be able to access them "anytime, anywhere" for future academic and professional requirements, the department added.

QUICK READ

Auditors' Appointment Mandatory for Cooperative Societies

Vijayapura

The Joint Director of the Audit Department has issued an important notice to all registered cooperative societies in Vijayapura district, instructing them to complete the appointment of auditors for the financial year 2025–26 without delay. According to the notification, cooperative societies that have not yet finalised auditors for the annual audit must do so within seven days from the date of publication of the notice. The decision regarding the appointment of auditors or audit firms must be taken in the society's general body meeting and approved as per prescribed procedures. The notice clearly states that after appointing the auditor, the concerned cooperative society must submit the details to the Joint Director's office of the Audit Department.

Sudhakar seeks additional water to fill 16 lakes

Chitradurga

In view of the severe water crisis affecting Hiriyur taluk, Planning and Statistics Minister and District In-charge Minister D. Sudhakar has urged the state government to reallocate additional water to fill lakes in the drought-prone Javangondanahalli hobli. He submitted a formal proposal to Minor Irrigation and Groundwater Development Minister N. S. Boseraju, seeking immediate action. The proposal was submitted during a meeting held at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru. In his letter, Sudhakar requested the reallocation of an additional 0.107 TMC of water, increasing the total allocation to 0.307 TMC, to fill 16 lakes in Javangondanahalli hobli and the Gayatri reservoir, primarily to meet drinking water needs.

SC–ST reservation should match population: Former MP

Former MP Ugrappa demanded an increase in SC–ST reservation proportional to population, stressing constitutional justice and equality

TUMKUR

Former Member of Parliament Ugrappa has urged the government to enhance Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) reservation in proportion to their population, asserting that social justice cannot be achieved without equitable representation. He made this demand while addressing a gathering in the city on Monday, highlighting long-pending concerns of marginalised communities.

Speaking to the public, Ugrappa said that despite constitutional safeguards, SC and ST communities continue to face social, economic, and educational disadvantages. He argued that reservation policies must reflect current population data rather than outdated figures, so that benefits reach those who are still deprived of equal opportunities. Reservation is not charity; it is a constitutional right meant to correct historical injustice, he stated.

The former MP pointed out that population growth among SC–ST communities has not been matched with a corresponding increase in reservation in education, employment, and political representation. As a result, many eligible candidates are denied opportunities, he said. Ugrappa stressed that proportional reservation would strengthen inclusive development and ensure fair participation of marginalised sections in nation-building.

He also criticised what he described as attempts to dilute reservation policies and divert attention from core issues affecting Dalits and Adivasis. Ugrappa warned that weakening reservation would further widen social inequality and undermine the spirit of the Constitution framed by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

Addressing youth from SC–ST communities, he encouraged them to stay united, pursue education, and actively participate in democratic movements to safeguard their rights. He said awareness and collective action are essential to pressurise governments into implementing progressive and just policies.

Several social activists and community leaders present at the event echoed Ugrappa's views, calling for an updated caste census to accurately assess population figures. They demanded immediate steps to revise reservation limits based on scientific data and constitutional principles.

The programme concluded with a call for sustained democratic struggle to ensure social justice. Participants reiterated that increasing SC–ST reservation in line with population is crucial for achieving equality, dignity, and inclusive growth in society.

Sharanas' Contribution to Building an Egalitarian Society Is Immense: K.E. Chidanandappa

BALLARI

The contribution of Kayaka Sharanas in creating an egalitarian society by awakening people through vachanas against superstition, caste system, and inequality is immense, said K. E. Chidanandappa, Chairman of the District Guarantee Schemes Implementation Authority. He was inaugurating the Kayaka Sharanas Jayanti programme organised on Tuesday at the Hongirana Auditorium of the Cultural Complex on Dr. Rajkumar Road in Ballari.

The programme was jointly organised by the district administration, Zilla Panchayat, Kannada and Culture Department, and Ballari City Corporation. Addressing the gathering, Chidanandappa said that during the 12th century, casteism, inequality, and favouritism were widespread. The Sharanas, through the Vachana movement, highlighted the dignity of labour and set an example of sacrifice and service, which remains relevant even today.

He said the state government celebrates the Jayanti of great Sharanas such as Madara Chennayya, Samagara Haralayya, Madara Dhoolayya, Dohara Kakkayya, and Urilinga Peddi to remember their commitment to equality and Kayaka. Chidanandappa added that the present government is also following Basavadi Sharana ideals by implementing five guarantee schemes under the leadership of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar, aimed at empowering women and uplifting oppressed sections.

Delivering a special lecture, writer N. D. Venkamma described the 12th century as a golden era of social, cultural, and literary revolution in Karnataka. She said Basavanna and the Sharanas eradicated caste and gender discrimination through vachanas, upholding equality, Kayaka, and Dasoha principles. Retired lecturer Sushila Shirur D. N. highlighted the contributions of Sharaneyaras (women Sharanas) in dismantling social inequalities.

The programme included recitation of the Preamble of the Indian Constitution and a Vachana music performance by M. Raju Emmiganur's troupe from Kampli taluk. Assistant Director of the Kannada and Culture Department B. Nagaraj, teachers, students, and the public were present.

Sri Guru Revanasiddeshwara Jatre Mahotsava to Be Held on February 15 and 16

TUMKUR

The much-awaited Sri Guru Revanasiddeshwara Jatre Mahotsava will be held on February 15 and 16 at DM Palya village in Tumakuru district, according to information released by the organisers. The religious and cultural festival is expected to draw large numbers of devotees from Tumakuru and neighbouring districts.

Sri Guru Revanasiddeshwara is revered by devotees as a symbol of spiritual guidance, social harmony, and devotion. The annual jatre is traditionally organised with great devotion and enthusiasm, reflecting the deep-rooted faith of the local community. Preparations for the festival are currently underway, with villagers actively participating in arrangements to ensure smooth conduct of the event. As per the programme schedule, special poojas, abhisheka, and alankara of the deity will be performed on both days. Devotees will be given the opportunity to offer prayers and seek blessings throughout the festival. Religious discourses and devotional programmes are also planned as part of the celebrations, highlighting the teachings and spiritual significance of Sri Guru Revanasiddeshwara.

In addition to religious rituals, the jatre will feature cultural programmes, including folk music, traditional dance performances, and other local art forms. Temporary stalls selling food items, devotional articles, toys, and household goods are expected to add to the festive atmosphere, making the jatre a major social gathering for the region.

The annual Sri Guru Revanasiddeshwara Jatre Mahotsava will be celebrated at DM Palya on February 15 and 16

The organising committee has stated that necessary arrangements are being made for crowd management, drinking water, sanitation, and basic medical facilities for devotees. Volunteers will be deployed to assist pilgrims, while coordination with local authorities is being ensured to maintain law and order during the event.

Devotees from nearby villages have been invited to participate in the Sri Guru Revanasiddeshwara Jatre Mahotsava and make the occasion a grand success. Organisers have appealed to the public to cooperate with arrangements and follow guidelines to ensure a peaceful and spiritually enriching celebration.

The two-day jatre at DM Palya is expected to strengthen community bonding while preserving traditional religious practices that have been followed for generations in the Tumakuru region.

Lakshmi Hebbalkar Submits Key Survey Reports to CM

BENGALURU

Minister for Women and Child Development Lakshmi Hebbalkar on Tuesday submitted two important survey reports to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah at Shakti Bhavan in Bengaluru. The reports include the survey findings on gender minorities and the re-survey of former Devadasi women, aimed at strengthening welfare interventions for marginalised sections.

The submission of these reports marks a significant step towards evidence-based policymaking for inclusive social development. The gender minorities survey provides comprehensive data on the socio-economic conditions, challenges, and welfare needs of transgender and other gender-diverse communities across the state. Similarly, the re-survey of former Devadasi women is expected to help the government reassess existing rehabilitation measures and identify gaps in education, livelihood, housing, and healthcare support.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah reviewed the reports and discussed their key findings with senior officials. He emphasised the need to translate survey insights into effective policies and targeted schemes to ensure dignity, security, and sustainable livelihoods for the beneficiaries. The government, he said, remains committed to social justice and inclusive growth.

Senior officials present during the submission included Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh, Women and Child Development Department Secretary Shamla Iqbal, Managing Director of the Women Development Corporation Mahesh Babu, and the Minister's Special Duty Officer B. H. Nishchal.

Officials briefed the Chief Minister on the methodology adopted for the surveys and the preliminary recommendations proposed. The reports are expected to guide future programmes, budget allocations, and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that benefits reach the intended groups effectively.

The Women and Child Development Department stated that the findings would be analysed in detail and followed by inter-departmental consultations to design comprehensive action plans. The initiative reflects the state government's continued focus on inclusive governance and addressing long-standing social inequalities through data-driven decision-making.

Dr. Sharan Prakash R. Patil showcased Karnataka's healthcare progress at WHX Dubai, calling for global collaboration

Dr. Patil Highlights Karnataka's Healthcare Advances at WHX Dubai 2026

BENGALURU

Sharan Prakash R. Patil, Karnataka's Minister for Medical Education, Skill Development, Entrepreneurship, and Livelihood, highlighted the state's rapid advancements in medical education and healthcare delivery at the World Health Exhibition (WHX) Dubai 2026.

Addressing the international gathering, Dr. Patil urged the global health community to work together to build stronger, healthier nations. Emphasising inclusivity in healthcare, he said there should be no barriers or borders when addressing humanity's health challenges, adding that a healthier population is fundamental to national growth and stability.

The three-day WHX Dubai 2026 has brought together more than 4,800 exhibitors from over 180 countries, representing major healthcare-technology markets worldwide. The exhibition features cutting-edge medical devices, imaging and diagnostic solutions, healthcare IT, digital health platforms, hospital infrastructure, and allied services. Alongside the exhibition, several CME-accredited conferences, boot camps, and expert-led stages are focusing on breakthrough research, artificial intelligence, telehealth, and sustainable healthcare models. Organisers expect nearly 270,000 professional visits, with participation from buyers, healthcare leaders, and decision-makers, and at least 33 international pavilions, including strong representation from China, Germany, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

During his visit, Dr. Patil toured the booth of Aster DM Healthcare, where he appreciated the organisation's integrated healthcare model and its extensive presence across the GCC and India. Azad Moopen and Alisha Moopen briefed the minister on Aster's comprehensive ecosystem covering primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary care, supported by advanced digital health initiatives. UAE Health and Prevention Minister Ahmed Al Sayegh was also present during the interaction.

Later in the day, Dr. Patil inaugurated Thumbay Medicity at the renowned Thumbay Medical Centre, in the presence of Thumbay Moideen, Founder President of Thumbay Group, and U. T. Ifthikar, Chairperson of the Karnataka State Allied Healthcare Council.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **J THYAGARAJA** son of T JAYARAMA NAIDU, residing at door no.1323, Amogham Mahal, Kaveri Extension, Doddaballapura, Bengaluru Rural - 561203, Karnataka, India, do hereby declare that I have changed my name to **J THYAGARAJ** and shall here after be known as **J THYAGARAJ** for all purposes. Sworn before me **B.K.G. Raju** Advocate & Notary Doddaballapura at 09.02.2026.

NAME CHANGE

I, **SHABANA BEGUM**, W/o, Mudassir Ahmed, residing at No 1134, Abdul Rahim Road, New Town, Bangarpet, Kolar District-563114,have changed my name to **FAZALUNISSA**, vide affidavit dated: 09.02.2026, before Notary N.NAGAPPA, Bangalore.

NAME CHANGE

I, **ABDUL AZEEEZ AKRAM PASHA**, S/o. Abdul Jaleel, Resident of No.48/B, 9th Cross, Pipe Line, J P Nagar Sarakki Iliyas Nagar, J P Nagar Post, Bengaluru-560078, have changed my name to **AKRAM PASHA**, Vide Affidavit Dated: 09.02.2026 before notary LAKSHMAIAH, Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE

I, **SALMA BANO**, residing at No 624, 2nd Floor, 28th Main, 31st Cross, Near Masjid Islamia, Tilak Nagar, Bengaluru-560041, have changed my name to **SALMA BANO FAZIULLA HUSSAIN**, vide affidavit dated: 09.02.2026, before Notary N.NAGAPPA, Bangalore.

IN THE COURT OF THE II ADDL CIVIL JUDGE AND JMFC AT DODDABALLAPURA
C.Misc No.969/2025
PETITIONERS: Smt.Lakshmamma W/o Late Krishnappa Aged about 53 years R/ at Gejjagadahalli village Madure Hobali, Doddaballapura Taluk Bangalore Rural DistrictV/S
RESPONDENT: Register of Birth and Deaths Rep. by the Thasildar Doddaballapur, Doddaballapur Taluk

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas the petitioners above named have filed above for the relief of registering death certificate of their Husband of petitioner namely Sri. Krishnappa S/o Late Eerappa died on 17-05-2005 resident of Gejjagadahalli Village, Madure Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk, and any person/s who are interested to be present before the Hon'ble court on 13.03.2026 at 11-00 a.m to contest the case and intend to relay in support of there defense. Take notice that in default of appearance on the day before mentioned the case will be here and determined in the absence.
Give under my hand and seal of the court on this 10.02.2026.

By order of the court
Chief Ministeral Officer Prl Civil Judge & JMFC Doddaballapur
Advocate for petitionerd: **Prakasha.C**, Advocate Doddaballapur

CH CLASSIFIEDS
To place a classified ad contact:
080-41209042

AFFIDAVIT

I, SAMUEL CEPHAS D CHARLES, S/o Charles P, aged about 33 years, R/at No. R/at No. 9, Colonel hill school Road, Lutheran Church Compound, Shivajinagar, Bangalore 560051, do hereby solemnly affirm and state on oath as follows:

1. I state and affirm that I am residing at the above-mentioned address with my family members and resident of Bangalore city by birth. I declare that, I was a student of St. John's High School, at Bangalore,
2. Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination, New Delhi, and studied my Higher Primary during the year 2006 under the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education Examination 2008 and I have completed my 10th Std during the year 2008 and I have obtained my Xth Std., statement of Marks, bearing No.TW 60018141.
3. I declare that I have lost my original Marks Sheet while in transit and I made all my efforts to trace my Xth std, mark sheet but in vain. I need my marks sheet urgently for my job purpose. If any one finds, the same may be handed over to me.
4. I declare that my statement of marks contains Index Number T/4198/041, with my parent's name as Smt. Janet Priscilla Rand Shri. Charles P. hence this affidavit for loss of my marks sheet.
5. I further declare that, in support of my 10th Marks Sheet, I am enclosing the copy of the same for kind reference.
6. I am further swearing to this affidavit for the purpose of producing the same before the concerned authority for getting my Duplicate Marks Sheet from my esteemed school.

The contents that I have stated in my affidavit are all true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief and nothing is concealed.
Identified by me
Sd/- Advocate

Sd/- Deponent
(SAMUEL CEPHAS D CHARLES)

SWORN TO BEFORE ME
K.VENKATESHAN, B.A.LL.B.,
ADVOCATE & NOTARY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
#1757, Sree Nivas 1st Cross, Oil Mill Road, Opp. Kalyani Bar, Kammanahalli, Bangalore-560 03 Mob: 9886776570
Bangalore
Date:03/02/2026

CHANGE OF NAME

I, MALAGOUDA PATIL S/o SATYAGOUDA, R/o Mallige Nivas, Bennihalli, Bambalwad, Chikodi, Belgaum, Karnataka-591226, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as AJAYGOUDA PATIL.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, NAGARATHNA M D/o BASAVAPOOJARI MANJUNATHA, R/o # 343 A, Jalli Crashar, Ashraya Badavane, Bommanakatte, Vinobanagar, Shimoga, Karnataka - 577204, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as NAYANA M POOJARY.

Financial Literacy Week Launched, CEO Dr. Akash S. Calls for KYC Awareness

CHITRADURGA

The district-wide Financial Literacy Week campaign was formally launched on Tuesday at the District Panchayat office in Chitradurga. District Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Dr. Akash S. inaugurated the campaign by unveiling the official poster of the Financial Literacy Week, organised jointly by the District Panchayat and the Lead Bank. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Akash S. highlighted the importance of financial awareness in today's digital and banking-driven economy. He emphasised that updating KYC (Know Your Customer) details is extremely important for all bank account holders. He said the public must be aware of procedures such as e-KYC and c-KYC, their benefits, and how they help ensure secure and seamless financial transactions.

Dr. Akash S. called upon officials and bankers to actively create awareness among citizens during Financial Literacy Week and make the campaign a success. He stressed that proper KYC compliance not only prevents fraud but also ensures uninterrupted access to banking services, government benefits, and digital payment platforms.

Lead Bank Manager Raghavendra M. spoke about the various initiatives planned during the week, including awareness camps, customer interactions, and outreach programmes in urban and rural areas. He said special focus would be given to educating senior citizens, farmers, women self-help groups, and students about basic banking practices. Also present at the programme was Reserve Bank of India Regional Manager Jagannath, who underlined the role of financial literacy in strengthening the overall banking system.

French Prez Macron in India next week for AI Summit

President Macron and PM Modi will hold talks to strengthen the India-France Strategic Partnership under the Horizon 2047 Roadmap

NEW DELHI

French President Emmanuel Macron will visit India from February 17 to 19 at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

During the visit, he will participate in the India AI Impact Summit in New Delhi, the first global AI summit hosted in the Global South.

The summit will focus on policy, research, industry, and public engagement, bringing together global leaders, innovators, and experts to discuss AI for governance, innovation, and sustainable development.

As part of his trip, President Macron and PM Modi will

hold talks to strengthen the India-France Strategic Partnership under the Horizon 2047 Roadmap. They will jointly inaugurate the India-France Year of Innovation 2026 in Mumbai, an initiative promoting innovation, research, technology, and people-to-people exchanges throughout the year.

The summit, held from February 16 to 20 at Bharat Mandapam, will include the India AI Impact Expo covering 70,000 square metres with over 300 exhibitors from 30 countries. The event will explore AI's practical applications, highlighting transitions from research to large-scale deployment. Anchored on the themes of People, Planet, and Progress, the Summit reflects India's development-focused AI approach aligned with the IndiaAI Mission and Digital India Initiative.

This visit follows PM Modi's February 2025 trip to France and demonstrates the deep trust and strategic alignment between the two countries. Leaders will also discuss regional and global issues, including Indo-Pacific cooperation, underscoring their shared commitment to technology, innovation, and sustainable development.

Joshi criticizes Cong over objectionable posters

NEW DELHI

Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy, Prahlad Joshi, sharply criticized Congress MPs for displaying objectionable posters against Prime Minister Narendra Modi inside Parliament. Speaking during the discussion on the President's speech, Joshi called the act a deliberate provocation rather than a debate or protest. He said that such behavior crossed all limits and violated the dignity of the House.

Joshi targeted Congress leadership, saying the act showed how far Rahul Gandhi and his party have stooped. He linked this provocation to broader criticism of Congress governance, particularly in Karnataka, where he alleged the state treasury was emptied under CM Siddaramaiah's rule. Joshi claimed this mismanagement stalled development and discouraged investors.

He also highlighted past national security concerns, alleging that senior Congress leaders failed to act decisively after the 26/11 Mumbai attacks and held secret meetings with Chinese officials during Indian soldiers' confrontations with the PLA. Joshi argued that such policies weakened India's global stature and strategic positions for short-term political gains.

In contrast, Joshi praised Prime Minister Modi's leadership, stating that India now engages globally with strength, clarity, and confidence. He urged Congress to stop unnecessary bickering and acknowledge the progress made under the current government.

The minister emphasized that every Member of Parliament has a duty to maintain the respect and decorum of the House, and provocative acts like these only harm the parliamentary system. Joshi's comments underline the continuing tensions between ruling and opposition parties and reflect the growing focus on discipline, governance, and national image within Parliament.

China's vice-foreign min attends BRICS Sherpa Meet

NEW DELHI

China's BRICS Sherpa and Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu attended the first BRICS Sherpa meeting in New Delhi.

The meeting focused on strengthening BRICS cooperation and preparing for the 18th BRICS Summit. Ma highlighted President Xi Jinping's vision for high-quality development within BRICS, emphasizing peace, innovation, green development, justice, and closer people-to-people exchanges.

Chinese Ambassador Xu Feihong said China is ready to work with India, the BRICS chair for 2026, and other member countries to deepen practical cooperation, improve working mechanisms, and uphold international fairness. Participants exchanged views on key priorities for BRICS cooperation and discussed major events planned for the year.

India's BRICS Sherpa, Sudhakar Dalela, outlined the country's priorities based on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision, focusing on a "people-centric" and "humanity-first" approach, under the theme "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability."

Belarus participated as a partner country for the first time, represented by Ambassador M. Kasko. He conveyed a message from Belarus President expressing confidence that India's chairmanship will mark a year of new achievements and further progress for BRICS, strengthening its role as a major global organization.

Ex-FS Shringla warns rise of extremism in B'desh

NEW DELHI

Former Foreign Secretary and Rajya Sabha MP Harsh Vardhan Shringla warned of the gradual erosion of secularism and the rise of extremism in Bangladesh.

Speaking at a book discussion on Seeds of Hate: Bangladesh's Extremist Surge, hosted by the Vivekananda International Foundation, Shringla said these developments are rooted in decades of historical patterns rather than recent political events.

He emphasized that the book documents long-term political structures and ideological trends, highlighting extremist organisations like Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh as historically grounded actors rather than abstract symbols. Shringla noted that extremism has grown through "quiet accommodation," selective forgetting, and rehabilitation of anti-Liberation War forces, rather than sudden disruptions.

Drawing from his experience as India's High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Shringla said the country was founded on a secular, democratic vision, rejecting communal politics in favor of a citizenship-based identity. He cautioned against focusing only on immediate events such as protests, elections, or the upcoming February 12 national elections and constitutional referendum. Instead, extremism must be understood as a product of decades-long accumulation of ideas, political habits, and organisational structures.

CH CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad contact: **080-41209042**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to public at large **Mr.Ravi C S/o. Chinswamy,** Residing at #42, 6th Cross, Chikka Basavannapura, Bangalore North, Bangalore Karnataka - 560049. He has lost the Hakku Patra of Doc No. L.N.D/SR 19/1975-76 dated on 26-01-1976 he has lost at Near Tin factory bus stop Accordingly he has lodged the complainant on Bangalore City Police with E-Lost dated 10/02/2026 Report No.2055993/2026.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY : All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing Site No.19, Katha No.83, Property No.1, Ward No. 53, Situated at Basavanapura Village, Krishnarajapura Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, Measuring East to West : 30 feet and North to South 40 feet, in all measuring 1200 Sq,ft bounded on **East by:** Property No.1, **West by:** Site No.6, **North by:** Road, **South by:** Site No.20. If anyone finding the aforesaid document is hereby requested to handover the same to our office at the address mentioned hereunder.

HARISHA .S, Advocate
 # 1479. DRLS PLAZA.
UNION BANK BUILDING. T DASARAHALLI,
Bengaluru-560057. Mob No. 9060950265.

Government of Karnataka
The Executive Engineer, Public Works Department, Hassan Division, Hassan.
No: EE/PWD/HSN/JE-3/2025-26/ DATED: 06.02.2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION NO: 36/2025-26, Dated: 06.02.2026

Tender is invited by the Public Works Department on behalf of the Governor of Karnataka, as per Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000, Standard Tender Document KW-2, KW-3 & KW-4 from the eligible registered Contractors of Karnataka PWD and the contractors belonging to Scheduled caste, Scheduled Tribe, Category-I & Category-2(A) shall be domicile of the State of Karnataka for more than 10 years. Tenders Invited through E-Procurement for total Number of 28 Works under PWD Hassan Division jurisdiction. In that 01 work reserved for Scheduled caste Contractors and 01work reserved for Category-2(A) Contractors. The minimum Estimated Amount is Rs.30.00 Lakhs and maximum Estimated Amount is Rs.620.00 Lakhs. The Amount Mentioned in Tender Notification is Sanctioned Estimated Cost, but EMD & Class of Contractor is considered based on Amount put to tender which Excludes GST & Other Charges. Last date & time for the works is Date: 20.02.2026 @ 4:00 PM For more details visit https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in or contact this office through Phone No. 08172-268437 or in person during office hours.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, PWD, Hassan Division, Hassan.
ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ಹಿಸನ/ಹಾಸನ/1038/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
Public Works Department
Executive Engineer PWD Division Chikkodi
No/PWD/CKD DIV/AE-1/TENDER/2025-26/6910 DATE: 09/02/2026

Short term E-Tender Notification

Executive Engineer PWD Division Chikkodi has invited item wise e-Tenders from Registration in KPWD Department authorized by Karnataka Government for the works coming under the jurisdiction of Chikodi PWD Division 47 works under head of account 4059-SCP (CMIDP) and 19 works under head of account 4059-TSP (CMIDP), Totally 66 No. of works, amount put to tender is minimum of Rs. 6.40 Lakhs and maximum of Rs. 80.00 Lakhs.

Calendar of events:1)Last date for queries & clarifications : 16-02-2026up to 5.30 PM, 2)Last Date of Receipt of Bids : 18-02-2026up to 5.00 PM,3)Date of opening of Technical bids (Two Cover System): 20-02-2026at 4.30 PM, 4)Date of opening of Financial bids (Two Cover System): "after approval of Technical bids", 5)If no bid received auto extension will be done by e-proc itself for 2 days.

For more information & forms of tender can be downloaded from kppp.karnataka.gov.in& departmental web site www.kpwd.gov.in. Further details can be collected from O/o Executive Engineer Public Works Dept.,Division Chikkodi during working hours.

Sd/- Executive Engineer
DIPR/BGM/RO-NO-1808/KSMCA/2025-26 **PWD Division Chikodi.**

ಜಿಲ್ಲಾಧಿಕಾರಿ ಹಾಗೂ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ದಂಡಾಧಿಕಾರಿಯವರ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ
ಉಡುಪಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ, ಉಡುಪಿ

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ
(Karnataka Public Procurement Portal OCD)

ಉಡುಪಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ಅಟಲ್ ಜೀ ಜನಸ್ನೇಹಿ ಕೇಂದ್ರಗಳಿಗೆ ಹೊರಗುತ್ತಿಗೆ ಆಧಾರದ ಮೇಲೆ 23 ಡಾಟಾ ಎಂಟ್ರಿ ಆಪರೇಟರುಗಳನ್ನು ಪಡೆಯುವ ಸಂಬಂಧ ಅಧಿಕೃತವಾಗಿ ಮಾನ್ಯತೆ ಪಡೆದ ಹೊರಗುತ್ತಿಗೆ ಏಜೆನ್ಸಿಯವರಿಂದ ಸವಿವರವಾದ ದರಪಟ್ಟಿ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಟೆಂಡ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 17.02.2026 ರಂದು ಅಪರಾಹ್ನ 5:30 ಘಂಟೆ. ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಾಗಿ ಕಛೇರಿ ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 0820–2574924/925 ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ . ಟೆಂಡರಿಗೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದ ವಿವರವನ್ನು ಆನ್‌ಲೈನ್ ಮೂಲಕ **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ : **RD/2025-26 /SE0511** ನಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ.

(ಅಬೀದ್ ಗದ್ಯಾಳ, ಕ.ಆ.ಸೇ.)
ಅಪರ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾಧಿಕಾರಿ
ಉಡುಪಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ, ಉಡುಪಿ

Bengaluru South Zilla Panchayat
Office of the Executive Engineer
PANCHAYATHRAJ ENGINEERING DIVISION
Ramanagara, Bangalore South Dist.

No.: EE/PRED/Rmg/J.E./TND-35/2025-26 Date: 09.02.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Only through E-PROCUREMENT system)

The Executive Engineer, Panchayathraj Engineering Division, Ramanagara, invites the Itemwise tender. Contractors registered in KPWD, enrolled in PRED/PWD for the works under different Head of Account. Minimum Tender amount **Rs.7.50 lakh**. Maximum Tender amount **Rs.97.80 lakh**. Last Date for submission of Tender Dated: **18.02.2026 by 4:00 PM**. Opening of the Tender Dated: **19.02.2026 at 4:30 PM**. Opening of the Financial Bid Tender Dated: **23.02.2026 at 4:30 PM** onwards (Only for KW-III). For details & further information visit the website **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** Or contact this office in office hours.

Sd/- **Executive Engineer**
DIPR/BSD/630/SA/2025-26 Panchayathraj Engineering Division, Ramanagara

ಪದವಿ ಪೂರ್ವ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಇಲಾಖೆ
ಉಪನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಶಾಲಾ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಇಲಾಖೆ (ಪದವಿ ಪೂರ್ವ)
ಮೈಸೂರು ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ. ಇ–ಮೇಲ್: ddnnpue@gmail.com

ಸಂ: ಶಾಶಿಇ(ಪಪೂ)/ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ್/ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂ/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 07.02.2026

ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅಧಿಸೂಚನೆ
(ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಮಾತ್ರ)

ಉಪನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರ ಕಚೇರಿ, ಶಾಲಾ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಇಲಾಖೆ(ಪದವಿ ಪೂರ್ವ) ಮೈಸೂರು ಇವರಿಂದ ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡಂತೆ ಆಯ್ದ 06 ಆದರ್ಶ ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ಪದವಿ ಪೂರ್ವ ಕಾಲೇಜುಗಳಿಗೆ ವಿಜ್ಞಾನ ವಿಭಾಗಕ್ಕೆ ಅವಶ್ಯವಿರುವ ಪ್ರಯೋಗಾಲಯ ಉಪಕರಣಗಳನ್ನು ಖರೀದಿಸಿ ಸರಬರಾಜು ಮಾಡುವ ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನ್ನು ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ ನಿಯಮಾನುಸಾರ ಖರೀದಿ ಹಾಗೂ ಪೂರೈಸುವ ಕುರಿತು ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅನ್ನು ಆಸಕ್ತ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳಿಂದ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಕ್ರ. ಸಂ.	ವಿವರಗಳು	ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ	ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಮೊತ್ತ ಲಕ್ಷ ರೂಗಳಲ್ಲಿ
01	SUPPLY OF LAB EQUIPMENTS FOR 06 GOVT ADARSHA PU COLLEGES 06 ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ಆದರ್ಶ ಪದವಿ ಪೂರ್ವ ಕಾಲೇಜುಗಳಿಗೆ ಪ್ರಯೋಗಾಲಯ ಉಪಕರಣಗಳನ್ನು ಸರಬರಾಜು ಮಾಡುವ ಬಗ್ಗೆ.	PUED/ 2025-26/ IND0105	ರೂ. 54.00 ಲಕ್ಷ

ಸಂಪೂರ್ಣ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ನಲ್ಲಿ ವೀಕ್ಷಿಸಬಹುದಾಗಿದ್ದು ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಪ್ರಾರಂಭ **ದಿನಾಂಕ: 07.02.2026** ಕೊನೆಯ **ದಿನಾಂಕ: 16.02.2026 ಸಂಜೆ 5:30 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ.** ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳಿಗೆ ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟ್‌ಲ್‌ನ್ನು ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸುವುದು.

ಸಹಿ/– ಉಪನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು
DIPR/MYS/1635/SA/2025-26 **ಶಾಲಾ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಇಲಾಖೆ (ಪದವಿ ಪೂರ್ವ), ಮೈಸೂರು.**

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
MINOR IRRIGATION & GROUND WATER DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
M.I & G.W.D.D. DIVISION, VIJAYAPUR
No.MI&GWDDD/VJP/AE-4/4702/CORRIGENDUM/2025-26/4271 Date: 09.02.2026

TENDER CORRIGENDUM NOTIFICATION

Ref :-This office Short Term Tender Notification No.EE/MID/VJP/ AE-4/4702/TND/2025-26/4124, Dated:29/01/2026.

With respect to above cited reference, vide this office tender notification were issued for a total of Three(3) works under 4702-SCP Head of Account from this division. Out of these, the time schedule of the **"Construction of a Series of Bandar/Barrages/Bridge-Cum-Barrages across the Local Nala to Provide Irrigation Facilities Benefiting Scheduled Caste Farmers near Mannur and Nagwad Villages in Basavan Bagewadi Taluk of Vijayapura District"** work are postponed due to technical reason, the invited tenders publishing dates further mentioned below:

CALENDER OF EVENTS :-

1) Pre-bid Meeting Date and Time : 13.02.2026 at 11:00 Hours.
2) Last Date and Time for Tender Queries/Clarifications : 17.02.2026 at 17:30 Hours.
3) Last Date and Time for Receipt of Tenders : 18.02.2026 at 17:30 Hours.
4) Date and Time for Opening of Technical Bid : 20.02.2026 at 17:30 Hours.
5) Date and Time for Opening of Financial Bid : After obtaining approval to the technical bid from Competent Authority.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
MI & GWDD Division, Vijayapur
ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ವಿಜಯಪುರ/688/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26

ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರ್, ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ,
ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ವಿಭಾಗ, 2ನೇ ಮಹಡಿ, ಲೋ.ಇ. ಪೂರಕ ಕಟ್ಟಡ,
ಕೆ.ಆರ್. ವೃತ್ತ , ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು-1. ದೂ.ಸಂ.: 080-22133370

ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ಕಾಇ/ಲೋಇ/ಬೆಂವಿ/ಎಇ.2/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 05.02.2026

ದರಸೂಚಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಮೊಹರು ಮಾಡಿದ ಐಟಂವಾರು ಕೊಟೇಶನ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಸಹಾಯಕ ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರ್, ನಂ. 1, ಲೋ.ಇ. ದಕ್ಷಿಣ ಉಪವಿಭಾಗ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ರವರು ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಕಾರಾಗೃಹದ ಆವರಣದಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಕುಡಿಯುವ ನೀರು ಶುದ್ಧೀಕರಣ ಘಟಕ (RO PLANT) ದ ವಾರ್ಷಿಕ ನಿರ್ವಹಣೆ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಯ ಅಂದಾಜು ಪಟ್ಟಿಯನ್ನು ತಯಾರಿಸಲು ಅಗತ್ಯವಿರುವ ದರಸೂಚಿಗೆ ಈ ಕಛೇರಿಯಿಂದ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಪಾರದರ್ಶಕತೆ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಣೆ ಅಧಿನಿಯಮ–2000 ರನ್ವಯ ಕೆಡಬ್ಲ್ಯೂ–1ರ ನಿಯಮಗಳಂತೆ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನೋಂದಾಯಿತರಾದ ಅರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ/ ಅರ್ಹ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳಿಂದ ವಿಶಿಷ್ಟ ವಿವರಣೆಯೊಂದಿಗೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಸಂಪೂರ್ಣ ವಿವರಣೆಯೊಂದಿಗೆ ದರಗಳನ್ನು ನೀಡಲು ಕೊಟೇಶನ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ವಿವರ ಕೆಳಕಂಡಂತಿವೆ:

ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರು/ಅರ್ಹ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳು ಲಕೋಟೆಯ ಮೇಲ್ಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಯ ಹೆಸರು ಮತ್ತು ವಿಳಾಸವನ್ನು ನಮೂದಿಸಿ ಮೊಹರು ಮಾಡಿದ ಲಕೋಟೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕೊಟೇಶನ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವುದು. **(1) Description of work:** Annual service and yearly maintenance contract for RO water plant, including consumables such as Activated carbon 200kgs, Multi grade sand media 700kgs, Micron cartridge 5mic/20 jumbo 24 Nos., anti scalant for members (5x12) 60 kgs, RO cleaning chemical (6 times) etc., for one 300-LPh Plant AMC Charges includes removal, Replacement sand and activated carbon from sand and activated carbon filter, chemical servicing of RO membrane (once in every 2 months), Raw water pump Checking/servicing, (if required) for optimizing power & flow. Checking of flow rate of membrane & TDS on site, PH booster (5kg per month), Water analysis test charges every month, High pressure pump Checking/servicing, (if required) to optimize power & flow, Anti scaling dosing chemical (As per requirement) replenishing. Cleaning of raw water and product water tanks regularly. (Record for above process to be maintained at the plant). Changing of micron cartridges every month, monthly visit for routine and Furnishing reports of water quality and emergency trouble shooting withing 12hrs. of complaint, the plant should be maintained periodically as instructed by Engineer in charge of the work including cost and conveyance of all Materials, labour for all items of work, machinery and equipments and all other incidental charges with all the lead and lift, loading and unloading charges etc., complete and the work shall be executed as per standards and directions of the users Department and Engineer in charge of the work..... Including all lead, lifts, loading, unloading, transportation, labour hire charges of machinery curing for concrete works cost and convence of all material and all other such incidental charges necessary for successful completion of works as per the detailed technical specification and direction of Engineer in charge of this work. ಕೊಟೇಶನ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಸ್ವೀಕರಿಸಲು ನಿಗದಿಗೊಳಿಸಿರುವ ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: **15.02.2026ರ ಸಂಜೆ 4.30 ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ.** ಇಚ್ಛೆಯುಳ್ಳ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರು/ಅರ್ಹ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳು ಮೇಲ್ಕಾಣಿಸಿದ ಅಂಶಗಳಿಗೆ ಈ ಕೆಳಗಿನ ಷರತ್ತುಗಳಿಗೆ ಒಳಪಟ್ಟು ಕೊಟೇಶನ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ನಿಗದಿತ ಸಮಯದೊಳಗಾಗಿ ಮುದ್ರಾಂ ಅಥವಾ ಪೋಸ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಈ ಕಛೇರಿಗೆ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವುದು. **ಷರತ್ತುಗಳು: (1)** ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರು/ಅರ್ಹ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳು ಕೊಟೇಶನ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ದರಗಳನ್ನು ನಮೂದಿಸುವುದಕ್ಕೆ ಮೊದಲು ಸ್ಥಳವನ್ನು ಕಡ್ಡಾಯವಾಗಿ ವೀಕ್ಷಣೆ ಮಾಡತಕ್ಕದ್ದು ಹಾಗೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳೇನಾದರೂ ಬೇಕಾದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಛೇರಿ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು. **(2)** ಕೊಟೇಶನ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವಾಗ ದರಗಳನ್ನು (ಅಂಕಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮತ್ತು ಅಕ್ಷರಗಳಲ್ಲಿ) ಸ್ಪಷ್ಟವಾಗಿ ಕಾಣಿಸುವಂತೆ ನಮೂದಿಸಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವುದು ಹಾಗೂ **ಜಿ.ಎಸ್.ಟಿ. ದರವನ್ನು ಪ್ರತ್ಯೇಕವಾಗಿ ನಮೂದಿಸುವುದು.**

ಸಹಿ/- ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು
ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ಉನಿ–ಸಿ.ಪಿ/5563/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE DEPARTMENT
ENGINEERING DIVISION KALABURAGI
PWD Quarters No: 110-D, Opp: HKES Womens Polytechnic College, Iwan-E-Shahi Colony
Kalaburagi-585102 Phone/Fax No-08472 – 241982. E –mail-ee.khsdrp.klb@gmail.com

No:HFW/EE/DIVN/KLB/AE-2/Tender/2025-26/1595 Date: 10.02.2026

:: TENDER NOTIFICATION ::

The Executive Engineer, H & FWD Engineering Division Kalaburagi invites tenders in Two cover tender document system online in KPP portal for the following works.

Sl. No	Description of work	Amount put to tender (Excluding GST) (Rs.In lakhs)	Earnest Money deposit (In Rs)	Period of completion including Monsoon
1	Repairs to Taluka General Hospital at Huvina Hadagali in Vijayanagar district.	**84.00**	168000.00	6 months
2	Repairs to Primary Health Centre at Mylara in Huvina Hadagali Taluk, Vijayanagar district.	**42.00**	84000.00	3 months

Calendar of Events: 1) Last date & time for receipt of Tender Online in Kppp-portal. : **25.02.2026 up to 16:00 hours**, 2) Last date & time for opening of technical bids : **26.02.2026 at 16.30 hours**

Note: 1) Please note henceforth any changes in the schedule will not be published through news papers & further changes will be updated only in kppp portal. 2) All the rights are reserved by the under signed for postponement or cancellation of entire tender process, rejection of bids/ individual bid etc.,without assigning any reason.

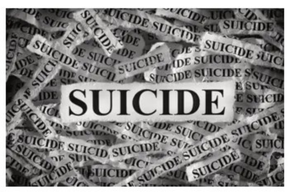
Sd/- Executive Engineer
DIPR/Kalaburagi/1067/KSMC&A/2025-26 **H & FWD Engineering Division, Kalaburagi**

QUICK READ

LS deadlock ends, budget debate resumes

NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Tuesday resumed discussion on the Union Budget, ending a long-standing deadlock between the government and opposition benches. The delay had occurred over Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's demand to speak on several issues. Chair Krishna Prasad Tenneti called on Shashi Tharoor to start the debate. The thaw followed opposition notice seeking removal of Speaker Om Birla. Since February 2, repeated disruptions led to suspension of seven Congress members and one CPI(M) MP, prompting Birla to request PM Modi not attend earlier sessions.



Triple suicide reveals shocking family secrets

GHAZIABAD

The triple suicide of sisters Nishika (16), Prachi (14), and Pakhi (12) in Ghaziabad has exposed disturbing family dynamics. Their father, Chetan Kumar, had three wives—Sujata, Heena, and Tina, who are siblings—and a live-in partner who died in 2015. Sujata was Nishika's mother; Heena, mother to Prachi and Pakhi; Tina has a four-year-old daughter. The family also has a disabled son. Kumar, a stockbroker with Rs 2 crore debt, struggled financially, reportedly selling his daughters' mobile phones to pay bills.

'Birla to skip LS proceedings as Oppn moves no-confidence motion'

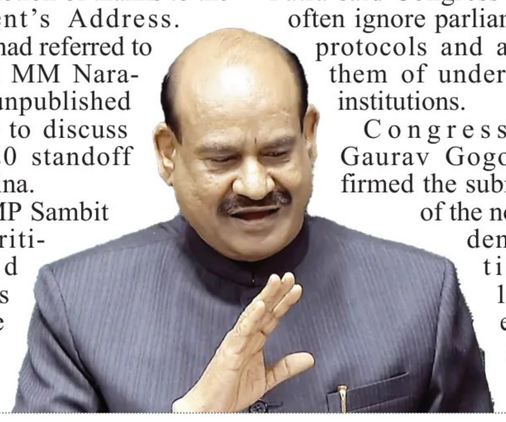
BJP's Sambit Patra accused Congress of bias and protocol violations, while Gaurav Gogoi confirmed no-confidence motion submission

Continued from page 1

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has decided not to attend House proceedings on moral grounds until a no-confidence motion against him is disposed of, sources said.

This follows Congress submitting a notice of no-confidence against the Speaker, signed by 118 MPs under Rule 94C.

The Speaker has asked the House Secretary-General to review the motion and take appropriate action. Opposition MPs alleged that Birla's conduct was "blatantly partisan," citing instances where leaders like Rahul Gandhi were not allowed to speak during discussions, including on the motion of thanks to the President's Address. Gandhi had referred to General MM Naravane's unpublished memoir to discuss the 2020 standoff with China.



BJP MP Sambit Patra criticized Congress for the motion, questioning its credibility and citing past impeachment attempts against a Tamil Nadu judge in the Deepam case. Patra said Congress leaders often ignore parliamentary protocols and accused them of undermining institutions.

Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi confirmed the submission of the no-confidence notice at 1:14 pm, emphasizing the procedural basis of the motion. Sources said the motion cites four incidents against the Speaker as evidence of alleged bias and unfair treatment of Opposition members.

The move has intensified political tensions in the Lok Sabha, highlighting the ongoing confrontation between the ruling party and the opposition. Speaker Birla's decision to abstain from House proceedings is expected to continue until the motion is formally addressed, underscoring the procedural and ethical debates surrounding parliamentary conduct.

J&K plans full utilisation of Indus Water Treaty

JAMMU

The CM says the government is collaborating with the Centre on the Tulbul Barrage on Jhelum and a Chenab River water-lifting project for Jammu city, hoping for approvals to start work soon.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said the union territory government plans to fully utilise the current abeyance of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) to implement major water infrastructure projects.

Speaking in the Legislative Assembly, he stressed the need for long-term solutions to Jammu's water challenges, warning that traditional resources would not meet the city's future needs over the next 30-50 years.

CM Abdullah recalled that a proposal to supply water to Jammu from the Chenab River, submitted during the previous NC-Congress coalition when Sham Lal Sharma was minister, could not be approved due to IWT constraints. With the treaty currently under abeyance, the government now has the opportunity to revisit that project. He said the administration is working with the Centre on two major initiatives — the Tulbul Navigation Barrage on the Jhelum River near Sopore and a water-lifting project from the Chenab River in Akhnoor to supply Jammu city. "We are hopeful of receiving approvals soon, after which work will begin," he added.

Signed in 1960, the IWT allocated the Sutlej, Ravi, and Beas rivers to India, while the Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab were allocated to Pakistan. While India could fully use its rivers, projects on the other three were restricted to run-of-the-river dams with limited hydropower. The suspension of the IWT followed the Pahalgam terror attack in April 2025, giving India an opportunity to unlock the potential of these rivers.

CM Abdullah emphasised that the government aims to implement projects that address both present and future water needs, marking a significant step towards sustainable water management in Jammu and Kashmir.

Key discussions focused on student exchanges, training, technology sharing, research, and reducing food loss to strengthen bilateral cooperation

India-Fiji explore possibilities for co-op in digital infra

NEW DELHI

Minister of State for External Affairs Pabitra Margherita met Fiji's Finance, Commerce, and Business Development Minister Esrom Immanuel on Tuesday. The leaders discussed the full spectrum of India-Fiji relations, focusing on development partnership, capacity building, and cooperation in digital infrastructure, including ongoing projects and future opportunities.

Sharing details on X, MoS Margherita said the discussions were productive and highlighted shared priorities. The two ministers emphasized strengthening cooperation in digital infrastructure and enhancing skills and knowledge sharing between the countries.

Earlier in January, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan met Fiji's Minister for Agriculture and Waterways, Tomasi Tunabuna, at Krishi Bhawan. They discussed ongoing collaborations and explored future areas of partnership. Both sides agreed to extend the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by five years and establish a Joint Working Group to advance cooperation. Key areas discussed include student exchanges, training programmes, technology sharing for small-scale machinery, digital agriculture tools, research infrastructure, genetic exchange initiatives, and reducing food loss and waste. These efforts aim to strengthen long-term bilateral ties and support sustainable development in both nations.

In December 2025, MoS for Health Anupriya Patel met with health ministers from Sri Lanka and Fiji during the 2nd WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit in New Delhi. These meetings underscored India's commitment to regional cooperation and highlighted strong bilateral ties in health, agriculture, and development sectors.

The meetings reflect India's ongoing efforts to deepen strategic partnerships with Fiji and promote collaboration in education, technology, and sustainable development.

Babri Masjid will never be rebuilt: CM Yogi

BARABANKI

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday stated that the Babri structure will never be rebuilt, not even until the Day of Judgment. Speaking at a public meeting in Barabanki, he emphasized that the government focuses on delivering through work rather than words.

Reiterating the BJP's stand on Ayodhya, Yogi said the Ram temple would be built at its original location and criticized those opposing it.

He described Prime Minister Narendra Modi hoisting the saffron flag at the Shri Ram temple as a symbol of Sanatan Dharma and India's heritage.

Targeting opportunists, Yogi alleged that some only remember Lord Ram during crises and warned that lawbreakers cannot reach heaven. He urged people to respect rules, claiming those following them will benefit, while violators face dire consequences. The chief minister highlighted the inseparable link between India and Sanatan Dharma, alleging both face attacks internally and externally.

HPTDC-IRCTC partner to promote Kalka-Shimla toy train tourism

SHIMLA

The Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (HPTDC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) on Tuesday to boost tourism and increase occupancy in government-run hotels.

The partnership focuses on promoting the heritage Kalka-Shimla toy train and integrating IRCTC's rail-based tour packages with HPTDC properties. Tourists will be routed from Kalka to destinations including Shimla, Barog, and Kiarighat, with accommodation at HPTDC hotels.

Harjot Singh Sandhu, IRCTC Chief Regional Manager, said the collaboration leverages the corporation's pan-India digital presence to attract more visitors to Himachal Pradesh. "Through this MoU, tourists can enjoy heritage routes like the toy train while staying in HPTDC hotels," he added.

HPTDC Managing Director Rajiv Kumar stated the initiative aims to fill the 1,111 hotel rooms across the state, ensuring timely renovations, salary payments, and financial stability. The corporation has also tied up with platforms like MakeMyTrip and encourages hotels to host events and conferences.

As part of the agreement, a 'Shimla Toy Train Weekend Getaway' package has been launched, scheduled for March 27–29, 2026. The 2-night, 3-day tour includes toy train travel, stay at Hotel Holiday Home, sightseeing in Shimla and Kufri, and three breakfasts, priced from ₹8,255 per person.

Reddy seeks probe into T'gana BJP candidate's death

NEW DELHI

Union Minister G Kishan Reddy on Tuesday demanded a judicial inquiry into the suicide of a BJP candidate in Makthal Municipality, Mahbubnagar, Telangana, allegedly due to harassment by Congress leaders ahead of Wednesday's municipal elections.

Addressing the media, Reddy said the candidate, Yerukala Mahadevappa, committed suicide at 6 AM, and urged the State Election Commission and Telangana government to launch an impartial investigation. He accused Chief Minister Revanth Reddy of making false allegations against the BJP and condemned the threats allegedly faced by Mahadevappa.

Mahadevappa, contesting from Makthal Municipality's 6th ward, belonged to the tribal community. His family claimed he faced repeated harassment and intimidation from local political opponents since filing his nomination, causing extreme mental stress.

The Telangana BJP strongly condemned the incident, calling it blatant intimidation by the ruling Congress. Party spokesperson NV Subash said the candidate was pressured continuously, which pushed him to take his own life. "This is not an isolated incident but part of a dangerous pattern," he said, demanding a fair probe.

Subash also criticized the state police for allegedly failing to act on complaints, accusing them of siding with Congress leaders. The BJP stated it had lost faith in local authorities to conduct a fair investigation.

The tragic incident has intensified political tensions in the state ahead of municipal elections. BJP leaders warned that such coercive tactics undermine democracy and demanded urgent accountability for Mahadevappa's death.

Reddy reiterated that Congress's alleged threats are unacceptable and asserted that the BJP will pursue justice, emphasizing the need for an impartial judicial inquiry to uncover the truth behind the candidate's death.

50 houses torched amid Tangkhul-Kuki clash

UKHRUL

At least 50 houses were burnt in Litan village, Manipur's Ukhrul district, after renewed clashes between Tangkhul Naga and Kuki communities.

Following the violence, authorities suspended internet services in the district for five days to prevent the spread of misinformation.

Tensions began on Saturday after a scuffle injured Sterling Shimray of Sakibung village. Despite prohibitory orders, unidentified miscreants set fire to over 18 houses on Monday night, raising the total to 50 by Tuesday morning. Security forces have been deployed to restore order.

A minor firing incident also occurred in K Lungwiram village, Kangpokpi district, partially damaging a house. Officials said the situation is under control and investigations are ongoing.

The Konsaram Village Authority condemned the violence and urged state and central governments to provide security, relief measures, and restore peace. Police clarified that rumours of mass evacuations from Konshakhul village are false, noting only a few students and families temporarily relocated.

Authorities stressed vigilance and adherence to the law while trying to stabilise the situation and prevent further escalation.

CRACKDOWN ON DEEPFAKES

India enforces new IT rules to combat AI misinformation

Continued from page 1

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) on Tuesday notified strict new rules regulating artificial intelligence (AI) and synthetically generated content (SGI) in India. The amended framework classifies several types of AI content as illegal, bringing them under existing online offence laws.

Under the rules, AI content involving sexual abuse material, non-consensual intimate images, obscene content, fake documents, fraud, harassment, child abuse, or misinformation will be treated as illegal. Violators may face criminal action under laws including the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023.

All AI-generated content must be clearly labelled as "synthetically generated," with permanent metadata and a unique identifier linking it to the platform or tool used. Removing or hiding these labels will be prohibited. Digital platforms must use technical measures to prevent the creation and circulation of illegal AI content, such as child sexual abuse material or fake records.

The move follows controversy over the AI chatbot Grok on X, which was criticised in India for generating sexualised images of women and minors. Platforms like X, Meta, Instagram, and others must now remove illegal synthetic content within strict timelines to retain legal protections.

Users will be informed every three months about responsibilities, and accounts may be suspended or terminated for violations.

Special warnings are required for AI tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, and Grok, reminding users that misuse can attract criminal penalties, including under child protection, election, trafficking, harassment, and obscenity laws. Response timelines for takedowns have been tightened—urgent cases within 36 hours and other actions within two to seven days.

Routine edits, subtitles, translation, educational content, and accessibility tools are exempt, provided they do not mislead users or create false records. The rules aim to curb illegal AI content while allowing legitimate digital activity.

QUICK READ

Israeli forces stop Gaza terrorist crossing line

Tel Aviv

Israeli forces reported that they stopped a terrorist who crossed the Yellow Line in northern Gaza on Monday. The IDF said the person approached their soldiers in a way that posed an immediate threat. The Yellow Line separates areas controlled by Israel from those under Gaza's ceasefire agreement. Israeli forces operate east, north, and south of the line, while Hamas and other groups are not allowed to cross it. No other incidents were reported.

Karachi hospitals struggle with fire safety risks

Karachi

Karachi's public hospitals, many in decades-old buildings, face serious fire risks due to weak wiring and limited safety systems. Exposed cables, overloaded electricity, and lack of trained staff make emergencies dangerous. Oxygen plants and life-saving equipment increase the threat. In February 2024, a fire at Liaquatabad Hospital injured seven employees, killing five. While some firefighting gear was later added, many hospitals still lack emergency exits, alarms, or proper response plans, leaving patients and workers vulnerable.

Israeli forces destroy terrorist weapons depot

Tel Aviv

Israeli forces destroyed a weapons depot belonging to Jemaah Islamiyah last week near Beit Jinn in southern Syria. The IDF reported finding and eliminating weapons, mines, and communication tools from the site. The group has carried out and continues to plan attacks against Israel, the army said. Israeli forces acted to prevent future threats and secure the region. No casualties were reported during the operation, and the depot was completely destroyed.

US seeks stronger economic, security ties with Japan

The landslide win gives Takaichi a strong mandate to pursue both domestic and international initiatives; Trump and Takaichi is scheduled to meet in March.

TOKYO

The United States has announced plans to deepen economic and security cooperation with Japan after Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's Liberal Democratic Party won a decisive victory.

The landslide win gives Takaichi a strong mandate to pursue both domestic and international initiatives. US officials said discussions will focus on trade, investment, technology, and strategic coordination in the Indo-Pacific.

The two countries also plan closer collaboration on defense, intelligence, and joint deterrence measures. A summit between US President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Takaichi is scheduled in March, highlighting the importance of their alliance.

Economic resilience, including semiconductor production and supply chain security, is expected to be a priority. The move reflects the shared interest of Tokyo and Washington in maintaining regional stability amid rising tensions with China and North Korea. Analysts say the strengthened partnership positions both nations to respond effectively to evolving geopolitical and economic challenges.

JAPAN MULLS JOINING NATO INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT UKRAINE

Japan is planning to join a NATO initiative to support Ukraine with non-lethal defence equipment. The country may provide financial help for gear like radar systems and bulletproof vests, avoiding weapons or ammunition in line with its pacifist policies. NATO officials said Tokyo's participation will strengthen coordination among allies. This move highlights Japan's growing role in global security and its commitment to helping Ukraine defend against Russia, while respecting domestic legal limits.

JAPAN OPPOSITION SUFFERS HISTORIC POSTWAR POLL LOSS

Japan's main opposition, the Centrist Reform Alliance, won just 49 seats in Sunday's election, the lowest postwar total for an opposition party, Kyodo News reported. Formed in January from a merger of the Constitutional Democratic Party and Komeito members, the alliance's poor result blocks it from proposing budget bills or no-confidence motions. Its seats fell sharply from 167, while the ruling LDP increased to 316. Analysts say Japan's electoral system favors dominant parties, making it hard for opposition groups to gain ground.

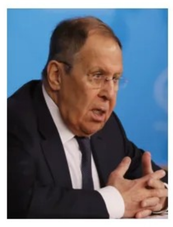
BRICS crucial for building greater Eurasian partnership

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov highlights BRICS' growing role in global affairs, emphasizing multipolarity, cooperation with emerging powers, and support for India's 2026 chairmanship agenda.

MOSCOW

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has emphasized the growing significance of BRICS as a key platform for shaping global politics and enhancing practical cooperation among its member countries.

Lavrov highlighted that Russia's foreign policy is guided by long-term, strategic partnerships that focus on trade, investment, scientific collaboration, and coordinated engagement in international institutions, including the United Nations. Regional frameworks such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Eurasian Economic Union, and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) play a central role in supporting these initiatives, he added.



Lavrov noted that the international system is undergoing a shift toward multipolarity, moving away from the Cold War's bipolar structure and the brief period of Western-led unipolar dominance.

Emerging powers like China, India, and Brazil, along with increasingly assertive African nations, are reshaping global economic, political, and strategic dynamics. He criticized Western countries for seeking to preserve their former dominance through restrictive measures, citing sanctions targeting Russian energy companies and efforts to limit trade and defense cooperation between Russia and its global partners, including India and other BRICS members.

Looking ahead to India's chairmanship of BRICS in 2026, Lavrov welcomed initiatives focused on food and energy security, digital technology, and artificial intelligence governance. He stressed the need to establish international norms for AI, particularly in security and military contexts, while ensuring that member states retain full sovereignty over their national policies.

Lavrov affirmed that Russia fully supports India's practical and forward-looking agenda. He underlined that systematic cooperation among BRICS nations produces tangible benefits, strengthens Eurasian partnerships, and reinforces the bloc's role as a significant actor in an increasingly multipolar world, by promoting shared interests and coordinated action, BRICS can continue to advance global stability, economic resilience, and regional security, positioning its member states as influential players in the evolving international order.

World Bank funds clean water projects Ghazni

XXX

Construction has begun on three clean drinking water supply networks in Ghazni province's Ab Band, Khogyani, and Zankhan districts, funded by the World Bank at a total cost of 20 million Afghanis. The projects are expected to provide safe water to around 1,000 families in the region.

Saeed-ur-Rahman Saeed, head of project implementation at Ghazni's Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, said the networks aim to address the severe water shortages caused by prolonged droughts, which have left many wells dry.

Local residents welcomed the initiative. Ezatullah from Ab Band said that in his village of 300 households, 90% have no access to water, while the rest rely on transporting it from distant sources. Mohammad Dawood added that families often crowd around a single working well, underscoring the urgent need for more water infrastructure.

Ghazni's Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development has already completed 10 World Bank-supported water networks this year, costing over 55 million Afghanis and benefiting nearly 4,000 families.

NEPAL INTERIM PM THANKS INDIA FOR MARCH POLL SUPPORT

KATHMANDU

Nepal's interim Prime Minister Sushila Karki met Indian Ambassador Naveen Srivastava at Singha Durbar to express gratitude for India's support in preparing for the parliamentary elections in March.

The Prime Minister highlighted India's contribution of vehicles, materials, and technical assistance to ensure smooth voting in the country's special circumstances.

In response, Ambassador Srivastava affirmed India's commitment to Nepal's democratic process, stating that stability and democracy in Nepal are important for both nations. The bilateral exchanges underscore the friendly ties and cooperation between the neighbouring countries.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission of Nepal has begun dispatching ballot boxes to remote districts to prepare for polling. Over 10.9 million First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) ballot papers have been printed for 88 constituencies across 37 districts. In total, more than 20.32 million FPTP ballot papers will be used for all 165 constituencies. Printing and packing of ballots have been completed for several districts, including Dolpa, Jumla, Kalikot, Bajura, Panchthar, Ilam, and Gorkha. The remaining districts are currently in the printing process at the Janak Education Materials Centre in Bhaktapur.

The proportional representation (PR) ballot papers are also being printed and prepared for distribution. Printing under the FPTP system began on January 6, while PR ballot printing started on January 10. The first phase included over one million sample ballot papers sent to various districts. Officials say all preparations aim to ensure a smooth and transparent election process across Nepal.

Iran warns of wider, forceful response to threats

TEHRAN

Iran's General Staff of the Armed Forces has warned that any threat to the country will be met with a "more forceful and wider" response. The statement, released on Tuesday ahead of the 47th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, praised the Iranian people's endurance and reaffirmed the nation's firm commitment to defending its territory and national interests.

The Armed Forces emphasized that Iran has consistently protected its core objectives and will confront any conspiracies or overreach with authority. The warning comes amid heightened US military presence in the region and ongoing indirect nuclear talks mediated by Oman. Press TV recalled last June's 12-day conflict with Israel, which ended after Iran's strong counter-operations and Israel's eventual request for a ceasefire.

The statement highlighted that pressure from the United States and Israel has only strengthened Iran's resolve. It noted Iran's achievements over 47 years in defense, science, technology, society, and culture, despite foreign hostility, sanctions, threats, and assassination attempts.

Devnimori relics draw thousands of devotees

COLOMBO

A high-level Indian delegation led by Madhya Pradesh Governor Mangubhai Chhaganbhai Patel and Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein visited Colombo to receive and escort the Holy Buddha Relics of Devni Mori back to India on February 11. Thousands of faithful queued for hours to offer flowers, prayers, and silent homage, reflecting deep devotion and the spiritual bond shared between India and Sri Lanka. Many centenarians and mothers with newborns visited the relics, showing the event's intergenerational significance. The International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), under India's Ministry of Culture, played a key role in curating exhibitions and facilitating interactions between Sangha communities, scholars, and cultural practitioners of both countries. Visitors prayed at displays such as "Unearthing the Sacred Piprahwa" and "Sacred Relic and Cultural Engagement of Contemporary India," highlighting centuries of Buddhist heritage.

Israeli Arabs, Jews rally for crime control action

TEL AVIV

Israeli Arabs and Jews held nationwide protests on Tuesday demanding urgent government action against rising violence in Arab communities. Organized by families of murder victims and the Jewish-Arab movement Standing Together, demonstrations took place in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa, Beer-Sheva, Lod, Tamra, and Jisr a-Zarqa, disrupting traffic and public spaces. The day will end with a large evening rally in Haifa.

Protesters also staged workplace walkouts to highlight everyday insecurity. Jamal Zahalka, former lawmaker and chairman of the Higher Arab Monitoring Committee, said the demonstrations reflect the daily reality of Arab citizens who face a "total lack of security." He urged Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to dismiss National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir.

In Tel Aviv, families and activists briefly blocked the Ayalon Highway, halting traffic for half an hour. Another protest near Allenby Street saw a woman in her 60s detained for pouring red paint into a public fountain. Similar scenes occurred in Haifa and Jerusalem, with police making seven arrests overall.

The protests follow an alarming rise in crime that has hit Arab communities hard. Since January, 38 people have been killed in violent incidents, part of 252 Israeli-Arab homicides in 2025. Organizers blame organized crime groups involved in turf wars, extortion, and trafficking, as well as government neglect and the uncontrolled spread of illegal weapons. The demonstrations underline growing frustration among Arab citizens and Jewish allies, demanding stronger government action to restore security.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

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8		5		6	7			4
7		4	9			3		
	8			4	9		7	1
2		1	8			9		
4		9		5	2		8	3
	4		7			5		
9		7		3	6		1	2
3		8	2			4		

1	2	6	4	3	7	5	9	8
9	4	3	6	5	8	1	2	7
7	8	5	2	1	9	3	4	6
8	6	7	3	9	2	4	5	1
3	9	4	5	7	1	8	6	2
5	1	2	8	4	6	7	3	9
6	5	1	7	2	4	9	8	3
2	3	9	1	8	5	6	7	4
4	7	9	9	6	3	2	1	5

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

HARSH REALITY

Pak economic freedom claims face hard reality check

ISLAMABAD

A recent analysis highlights that Pakistan's claims of economic stabilisation face major challenges.

Global rankings continue to place the country among lower-performing economies due to weak governance, unreliable judicial systems, and limited market dynamism.

While officials say inflation pressures have eased and reforms are underway, critics argue these improvements have yet to make a real impact on daily economic life.

Investors remain cautious amid concerns about political influence and contract enforcement.

Taxation presents a major contradiction. Although Pakistan's tax-to-GDP ratio appears low in international assessments, those already paying face high marginal rates and extra corporate levies. This increases pressure on compliant businesses and raises questions about actual economic freedom. Employment patterns add further complications, with most workers in informal arrangements, limiting productivity, shrinking the revenue base, and leaving millions without social protections.

There are positive signs, however. Price growth has slowed, privatisation discussions are returning, and tariff rationalisation suggests greater openness. Observers caution that these steps will only succeed if institutions are strengthened, rules are predictable, and business confidence is restored. Pakistan's path remains uneven, balancing reform promises against entrenched structural weaknesses. Future improvements will depend on implementation, credibility, and the state's ability to create a fair and stable economic environment.

KEY POINTS

- Low global economic freedom ranking
- Contradiction in high tax burden vs. low tax-to-GDP
- Dominance of informal employment
- Governance and judicial reliability concerns
- Modest reforms overshadowed by structural weaknesses.

QUICK READ

Trade deal: Sensex, Nifty rise for 3rd straight day

New Delhi

Indian stock markets closed higher on Tuesday, helped by a new interim trade deal between India and the United States and positive signals from Asian markets. The Sensex ended at 84,273.92, while the Nifty closed at 25,935.15. Experts said foreign investor interest and a stronger rupee lifted confidence. However, profit booking in banking, IT and healthcare shares limited gains. Investors are now watching upcoming earnings and policy steps for direction.

Sony rolls out wildlife-centric brand campaign

New Delhi

Sony India on Tuesday launched a new brand campaign, 'Think Wildlife, Think Sony', to attract a wider audience to wildlife photography and filmmaking. The campaign builds on its earlier wedding-focused effort and aims to make wildlife storytelling easy for beginners and professionals. Released across digital platforms, it showcases Sony's imaging products. A key highlight is its energetic anthem-based music, encouraging viewers to sing, remix and share the message on social media.

Gold ETFs register sharp 50% surge in January

New Delhi

Gold exchange-traded funds recorded a sharp rise in India during January, as investors moved towards safe assets. According to AMFI data, gold ETF inflows jumped 50 per cent to Rs 24,040 crore, more than double December levels. This figure was higher than equity mutual fund inflows, which fell to Rs 24,029 crore. Overall mutual fund flows turned positive at Rs 1.56 lakh crore, mainly driven by strong investments in debt schemes.

India's trade landscape transformed under PM Modi's leadership: Goyal

'The trade system is changing rapidly with stronger domestic and global reach'

NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership has reshaped India's trade environment at an unprecedented pace.

Speaking to a delegation of the Confederation of All India Traders, led by MP Praveen Khandelwal, at Vanijya Bhawan, he said domestic trade has become stronger while global markets are opening new doors for Indian products. These changes, he noted, are pushing the economy towards faster and more balanced growth.

Goyal highlighted the recently signed interim trade deal framework between India and the United States as a major achievement. The agreement ensures continued preferential access for Indian exports in the vast US market, valued at over 30 trillion dollars. He said such partnerships show India's growing confidence and credibility in global trade discussions.

The minister also spoke about the Bharatiya Vyapar Mahotsav, to be organised by CAIT from May 1 to 4 at Bharat Mandapam. He said the event supports the Prime Minister's call to promote Indian goods at home and abroad. The platform will display the strength and potential of India's trade, industry and services sectors.

Discussions during the meeting focused on promoting Swadeshi products, MSMEs, startups and artisans through digital payments and better market access. Goyal stressed giving special space to entrepreneurs from remote areas. Khandelwal said the four day event will feature about 2,200 stalls and attract nearly 10 lakh visitors, including two lakh business delegates.

He added that strong B2B and B2C networking at the event will help small traders connect with buyers. According to him, these combined efforts will support Make in India and Local to Global goals, improving livelihoods, boosting exports, and ensuring Indian businesses compete confidently in international markets over coming years ahead nationwide sustainably.

India shines as 'Country of the Year' at BIOFACH 2026

NEW DELHI

This designation marks India's return to the centre stage of global organic farming after 14 years.

India has been named Country of the Year at BIOFACH 2026, the world's leading trade fair for organic products, to be held in Nuremberg, Germany, from February 10 to 13. The recognition highlights India's growing strength in organic farming and exports, according to an official statement released on Tuesday.

The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority is organising India's participation with a large and high impact presence. Officials said this year's involvement is much bigger than earlier editions, showing rising global demand for Indian organic products and stronger participation from exporters, farmer groups and associations.

The India Country Pavilion will cover 1,074 square metres and host 67 co exhibitors. These include organic exporters, Farmer Producer Organisations, cooperatives, testing laboratories, state agencies and commodity boards. A wide range of products will be displayed, including rice, oilseeds, pulses, herbs, spices, cashew, ginger, turmeric, cardamom, cinnamon, mango puree and essential oils.

Exhibitors from over twenty states and union territories are taking part, reflecting India's rich agricultural diversity. Regions represented include Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Gujarat, Kerala, Karnataka, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir, among others.

Visitors will also experience curated food tastings at the pavilion. Live sampling of biryani made with organic basmati rice and spices will be offered. Five GI tagged rice varieties, including Indrayani, Navara, Gobindbhog, Red rice and Chak Hao, will showcase India's heritage crops.

APEDA has planned extensive branding across the exhibition venue. Officials said India's Country of the Year status strengthens its image as a global leader in sustainable and environmentally responsible organic agriculture. Officials said the honour will help expand exports, attract buyers, support farmers, encourage organic cultivation, and strengthen long term trade partnerships while promoting India's commitment to quality, sustainability, innovation, and inclusive agricultural growth worldwide globally..

ASTRAZENECA GETS CDSCO NOD FOR CANCER TREATMENT

NEW DELHI

The approval strengthens cancer therapy options in India with wider use of Durvalumab immunotherapy for patients.

AstraZeneca Pharma India Limited on Tuesday announced that it has received approval from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation to sell and distribute Durvalumab for an additional cancer indication. The approval allows the use of Durvalumab in combination with carboplatin and paclitaxel as first line treatment for adults with advanced or recurrent endometrial cancer who need systemic therapy. After initial treatment, patients will receive Durvalumab alone as maintenance therapy in cases where the cancer is mismatch repair deficient.

The company said the permission covers Durvalumab solution for infusion in 120 mg and 500 mg doses, sold under the brand name Imfinzi. The approval clears the way for marketing the drug in India, subject to other statutory requirements.

Earlier, the regulator had also approved Durvalumab with FLOT chemotherapy for patients with resectable gastric and gastroesophageal junction cancer. This decision was based on results from the phase three MATTERHORN study. The study showed that adding immunotherapy before and after surgery can reduce the risk of cancer returning and improve long term survival.

Gastric cancer is a serious health concern in India, with over sixty four thousand new cases every year. Although surgery and chemotherapy remain standard care, survival rates are still low and recurrence is common.

Praveen Rao Akkinepally, Managing Director of AstraZeneca Pharma India, said the new approvals bring immunotherapy earlier into treatment. He added that these steps aim to improve outcomes and offer patients better chances of survival and quality of life.

The company stated that the latest CDSCO decision reflects continued confidence in scientific evidence and global studies. It also signals growing availability of advanced cancer medicines in India, supporting doctors with newer options and strengthening patient access to treatments nationwide.

Indian auto retail sector kicks off 2026 with a bang

NEW DELHI

India's overall vehicle retail market grew 17.61 percent year-on-year in January, with total sales of 27,22,558 units, driven mainly by two-wheelers and passenger vehicles, according to the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA). Passenger vehicle (PV) sales rose 7.22 percent to 5,13,475 units, with urban markets contributing 59.2% of sales. Rural PV retail grew 14.43%, outpacing urban growth of 2.75 percent. FADA President CS Vigneshwar attributed growth to post-GST momentum, strong rural cash flows from harvests and wedding season, and steady demand in mobility and freight sectors. Two-wheelers led the growth with 18,52,870 units sold, up 20.82%, with rural areas accounting for 56 percent of sales. Commercial vehicles recorded 1,07,486 units, up 15.07% and 34,287 heavy commercial vehicles, both increasing about 14%.

Poor planning waste 80% of B'desh health budget

NEW DELHI

Bangladesh's healthcare system can meet most domestic demand, but poor management wastes nearly 80 percent of public spending, said AM Shamim, general secretary of the Bangladesh Private Hospital, Clinic and Diagnostic Owners Association.

In an interview with The Daily Star, Shamim noted that the national health budget is about BDT 42,000 crore, yet most resources are misused. Equipment that is essential often sits idle, while unnecessary purchases are common. He cited Labaid Cancer Hospital, where two LINAC machines treat 160–220 patients daily, compared to government hospitals with 8–12 machines treating far fewer due to mismanagement. Red tape worsens inefficiency. Licensing requirements from at least 18 agencies and one-year license validity lead to delays, bribes, and operational inefficiencies, despite recent extensions to two years. Shamim stressed that the sector is functionally self-reliant, yet structural flaws threaten accountability, efficiency, and public trust.

He highlighted that outbound medical travel has fallen sharply. Medical visas to India, once common for treatment, have dropped to a tenth in the last 18 months, reflecting the growing capacity of local hospitals.

Over the past two decades, Bangladesh's private health sector has expanded significantly, now providing about two-thirds of healthcare services. Despite gains in infrastructure and workforce, wastage, weak governance, and regulatory hurdles continue to limit the system's effectiveness.

Chennai's Marina beach blue flag project nears finish

CHENNAI

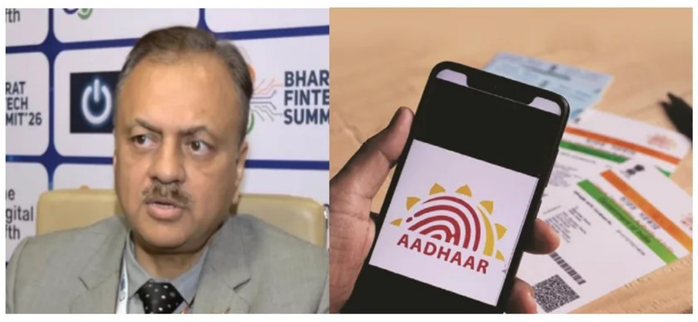
The second phase of the Blue Flag Beach project at Chennai's Marina Beach is almost complete, with civic authorities reporting 90% of work finished. The upgraded stretch is expected to open to the public by the end of this month, strengthening Tamil Nadu's efforts to achieve international recognition for its coastline.

The Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) is implementing the Marina Blue Flag project in four phases to meet strict environmental, safety, and cleanliness standards required for global Blue Flag certification. The first phase near the Marina swimming pool, completed at Rs 7.31 crore.

DIGITAL IDENTITY

Aadhaar 2.0 app focuses on data security

MUMBAI



The new Aadhaar app is expected to make identity checks easier while improving data security and user control, said Vivek Chandra Verma, Deputy Director General at UIDAI, during the Bharat Fintech Summit. He said the app reduces the need for physical papers and lowers the risk of fraud through digital verification.

Verma explained that the app follows the idea of data minimisation under the Digital Personal Data Protection Act. This means only the required details are shared for a specific purpose. Even basic information like a name or photo can be enough, and the data is digitally signed and verified.

He said companies prefer limited data sharing as it reduces legal duties and cyber risks. UIDAI is also pushing adoption in smaller towns and villages. India has over 142 crore Aadhaar holders, most linked to mobile numbers, while smartphone use continues to grow.

For families with limited phone access, the app allows up to five Aadhaar profiles on one device. Users can update details from home, lock or unlock biometrics, and manage family identities easily.

The app enables QR code based sharing, removing the need for photocopies. Users can see who is asking for data and why, and information is shared only after consent. Verma said this builds trust and cuts fraud, as digital checks quickly flag fake details.

He added that no data breach has occurred from UIDAI's core system in sixteen years. Most misuse happens through careless sharing of paper copies. With new data laws, organisations must protect information and report breaches.

On artificial intelligence, Verma said UIDAI uses it for fraud detection and security checks within strict rules. The aim, he said, is a smooth shift.

WHAT IS THE NEW AADHAAR APP?

- The new Aadhaar app is an official mobile application developed by UIDAI that enables digital, offline, and consent-based Aadhaar verification.
- Unlike earlier apps, it allows users to verify their identity using Face Authentication or QR scanning without revealing their Aadhaar number.
- It offers features such as selective data sharing via QR codes, biometric lock/unlock, authentication history, and management of up to five family Aadhaar profiles.

Features

- New Aadhaar App reimagines identity verification keeping people at its core.
- Selective sharing, consent control at fingertips.
- Show, share, verify: Aadhaar App to expand Aadhaar usage, enhance ease of living.
- Its features are designed around security, privacy, and convenience.
- Face ID-based Aadhaar authentication.
- QR-based contact card for sharing contact details
- One-click biometric lock and unlock
- Consent-based selective data sharing
- Addition of upto five Aadhaar profiles on one device
- Mobile number and address update facility

BENEFITS

- It offers several advantages over older verification methods.
- Eliminates the need for physical Aadhaar cards.
- Enhances privacy through masked and offline verification.
- Faster identity verification for daily services.
- Reduces risk of Aadhaar data misuse.
- Works even in low or no-internet environments.
- Government-backed and officially launched by UIDAI.
- Several personal information updates can be completed using the app without visiting an Aadhar kendra.

SIP inflows remain steady at Rs 31000 cr in January

MUMBAI

Mutual fund Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) inflows in India hit Rs 31,000 crore in January, marking the second consecutive month above this level, according to AMFI data released on Tuesday. Year-on-year, SIP inflows rose 17 percent from Rs 26,400 crore in January 2025.

AMFI data showed that 7.4 million new SIP accounts were opened during the month, while 5.5 million accounts were closed. The total number of SIP accounts increased to 102.9 million from 101.1 million in December. However, SIP assets under management (AUM) declined slightly to Rs 16.36 lakh crore from Rs 16.63 lakh crore, reflecting market volatility. SIPs now make up 20.2 percent of the overall mutual fund AUM.

Investments in gold ETFs more than doubled to Rs 24,040 crore in January from Rs 11,647 crore in December, highlighting a preference for safer investment options alongside equities. Active equity mutual fund investments stood at Rs 24,029 crore, down about 14 percent from Rs 28,054 crore in December, showing cautious investor sentiment.

Overall, the mutual fund industry saw net inflows of Rs 1.56 lakh crore in January, up from Rs 66,591 crore in December, indicating renewed investor interest in mutual funds. Previous months had seen fluctuations, with equity fund inflows at Rs 29,911 crore in November and a peak of Rs 42,702 crore in July 2025.

The data suggests that while equity market performance affected AUM, investor confidence in SIPs and mutual funds remains strong, with growing interest in gold ETFs and a steady increase in SIP account numbers. This trend underscores the continued popularity of disciplined, long-term investment strategies in India's financial markets.

Secret Areas Around the World That Hide Truth

Throughout history, humanity has been fascinated by forbidden places locations shrouded in secrecy, protected by governments, militaries, or private organizations. These mysterious sites spark our imagination and fuel countless theories about what might be concealed within their boundaries. While some of these restricted areas serve legitimate purposes of national security or scientific research, others remain enigmatic, their true nature known only to a select few. This exploration takes us across continents to examine some of the world's most secretive locations and the truths they may be hiding.

Area 51: America's Most Famous Secret

Nestled in the Nevada desert, approximately 83 miles northwest of Las Vegas, Area 51 stands as perhaps the most notorious secret facility in the world. Officially known as Groom Lake or Homey Airport, this highly classified United States Air Force facility has been the subject of speculation for decades. The CIA only acknowledged its existence in 2013, though aviation enthusiasts and conspiracy theorists had long known of its presence.

The truth about Area 51, as far as declassified information reveals, centers on advanced aircraft testing and development.

The U-2 spy plane, the SR-71 Blackbird, and the F-117 Nighthawk stealth fighter were all tested here. The extreme secrecy surrounding these programs during the Cold War era contributed to numerous UFO sightings, as civilians spotted aircraft with capabilities that seemed impossible for the time. The unusual shapes and flight patterns of experimental aircraft, combined with the government's necessary silence about classified projects, created the perfect storm for extraterrestrial speculation.

What remains hidden at Area 51 today continues to be a matter of intense interest. Current satellite imagery shows ongoing expansion and construction, suggesting that cutting-edge aerospace research continues.

Whether the truth involves next-generation aircraft, drone technology, or something else entirely, the facility's restricted airspace and heavy security ensure that only those with the highest clearances will ever know for certain.

The Vatican Secret Archives

For centuries, the Vatican has maintained one of the world's most extensive collections of historical documents, many of which remain inaccessible to the general public. The Vatican Secret Archives, more accurately translated as the Vatican Private Archives, contain approximately 53 miles of shelving housing documents dating back over a thousand years. Access is strictly controlled, with only qualified scholars receiving permission to view select materials, and even then, documents less than 75 years old generally remain off-limits.

The truth hidden within these archives likely contains nothing supernatural or sinister, but rather embarrassing historical episodes, diplomatic correspondence, and records of church proceedings that the institution prefers to keep private. Documents that have been released over the years include letters from Michelangelo, correspondence related to the excommunication of Martin Luther, and records from the trial of the Knights Templar. Pope Leo X's excommunication of Martin Luther and the papal bull regarding King Henry VIII's request for annulment are among the historically significant documents housed here.

However, speculation persists about what else might be contained within those 53 miles of shelving. Could there be suppressed gospels, evidence contradicting official church doctrine, or records of deals made with political powers throughout history? The selective nature of document releases and the lengthy waiting period before materials become available for research ensure that the Vatican Secret Archives will continue to fuel curiosity and speculation for generations to come.

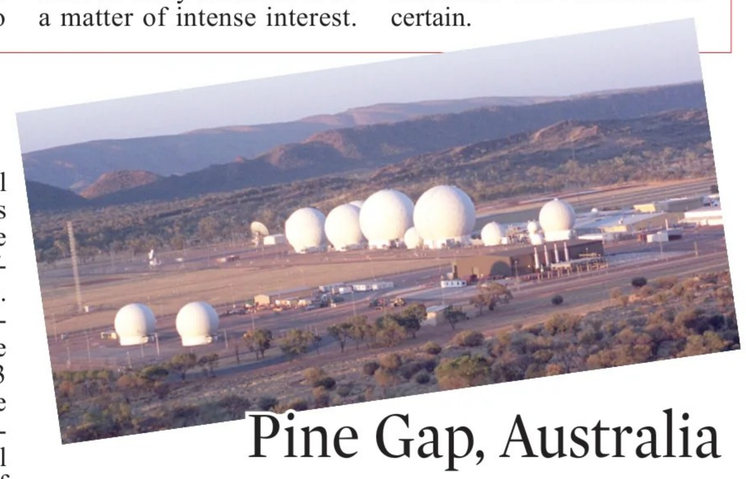
Mount Weather Emergency Operations Center

Hidden within the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, the Mount Weather Emergency Operations Center serves as one of several continuity of government facilities in the United States. This classified bunker complex is designed to house key government officials and maintain governmental operations in the event of a catastrophic emergency, whether nuclear war, terrorist attack, or natural disaster.

The facility's existence became more widely known after 9/11, when Vice President Dick Cheney was reportedly taken there as part of continuity of government protocols. However, the full extent of Mount Weather's capabilities and the specific plans for its use remain classified. The truth hidden here involves detailed protocols for maintaining government authority during national emergencies, lists of personnel designated for protection, and likely stockpiles of resources necessary for long-term underground habitation.

What makes Mount Weather particularly intriguing is its connection to the broader question of how governments plan for worst-case scenarios. The existence of such facilities raises questions about what disasters officials consider most likely, who gets saved in an emergency, and what version of democracy or governance would emerge from such a crisis. These are uncomfortable truths that most governments prefer not to discuss publicly.

Pine Gap, Australia



In the remote Australian Outback, approximately 18 kilometers southwest of Alice Springs, lies Pine Gap—officially known as the Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap. This facility operates as a satellite tracking station run jointly by Australia and the United States, playing a crucial role in global intelligence gathering and military operations.

The truth about Pine Gap involves sophisticated surveillance capabilities that can intercept communications, track missiles, and gather intelligence across a vast portion of the Earth's surface. The facility's powerful radomes, the white spherical structures visible in satellite imagery, house antennas capable of intercepting satellite communications, telemetry from missile tests, and signals intelligence from across the Asia-Pacific region.

What remains less clear is the full extent of Pine Gap's capabilities and how the intelligence gathered there is used. During various military conflicts, Pine Gap has reportedly provided targeting information for drone strikes and military operations, raising ethical questions about Australia's role in American military activities. The facility's operations are so secretive that even some Australian officials with security clearances are reportedly kept in the dark about its full capabilities, revealing how compartmentalized intelligence operations have become in the modern era.

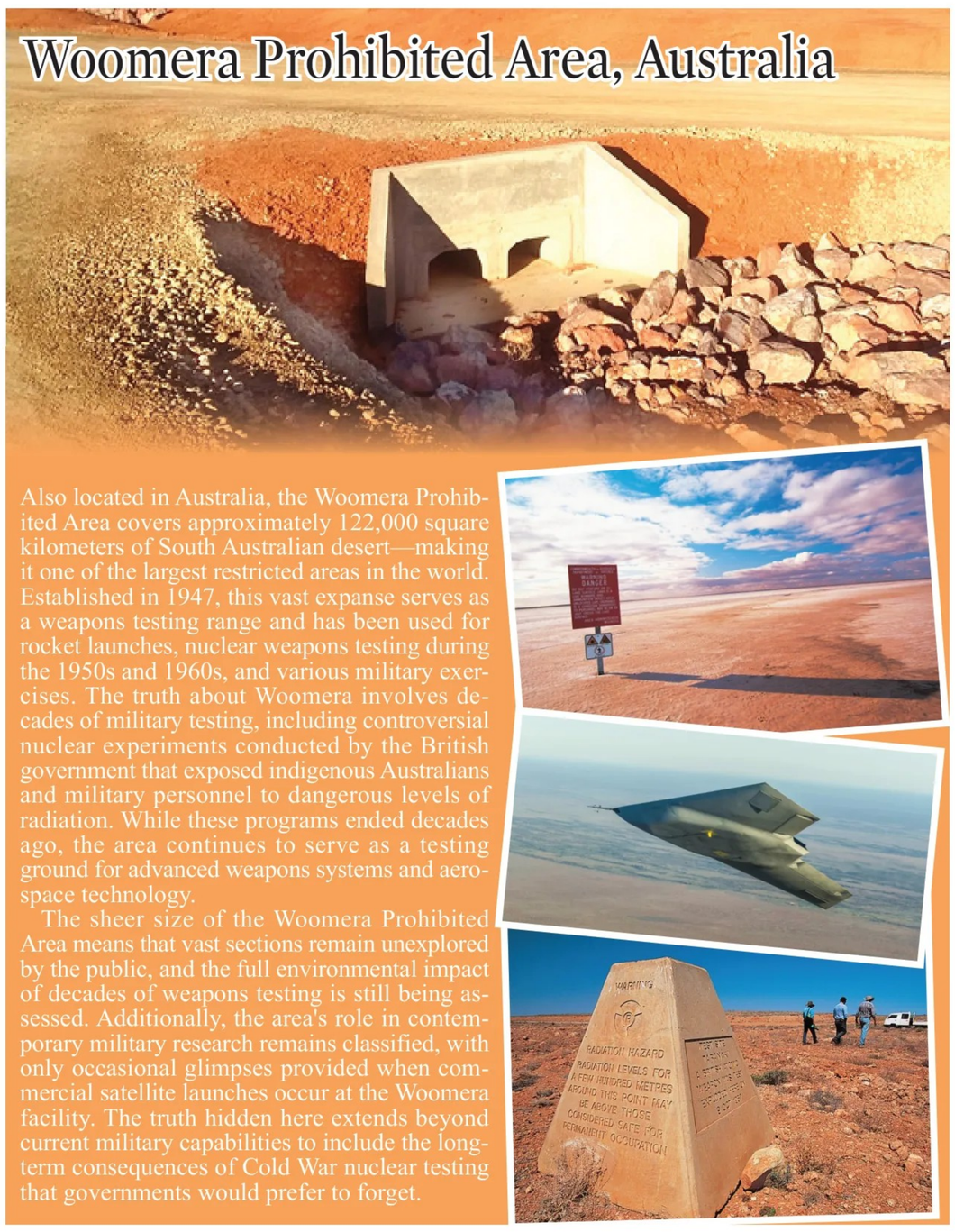
Mezhgorye, Russia

Deep in the Ural Mountains of Russia lies the closed town of Mezhgorye, home to what Western intelligence agencies believe is a massive underground complex. The town itself is off-limits to outsiders, and its approximately 17,000 residents work in industries officially described as mining and logging operations. However, satellite imagery and defector reports suggest something far more significant lurks beneath the mountains.

The truth about Mezhgorye likely involves Mount Yamantau, a massive underground facility rumored to be part of Russia's continuity of government infrastructure or possibly a command center for nuclear forces. Some analysts believe it could house the Perimetr system, also known as "Dead Hand," an automated nuclear response system designed to ensure retaliation even if Russia's leadership is eliminated in a first strike.

The Russian government has offered various explanations over the years, including claims that the facility serves as a mining operation, a repository for national treasures, or a food storage facility. The lack of consistent explanation and the heavy security surrounding the area suggest that whatever truth lies beneath Mount Yamantau is significant enough to warrant substantial resources and secrecy, even decades after the Cold War's end.

Woomera Prohibited Area, Australia


DANGER
RADIATION HAZARD
RADIATION LEVELS FOR A FEW HUNDRED METRES AROUND THIS POINT MAY BE ABOVE THOSE CONSIDERED SAFE FOR PERMANENT OCCUPATION

Also located in Australia, the Woomera Prohibited Area covers approximately 122,000 square kilometers of South Australian desert—making it one of the largest restricted areas in the world. Established in 1947, this vast expanse serves as a weapons testing range and has been used for rocket launches, nuclear weapons testing during the 1950s and 1960s, and various military exercises. The truth about Woomera involves decades of military testing, including controversial nuclear experiments conducted by the British government that exposed indigenous Australians and military personnel to dangerous levels of radiation. While these programs ended decades ago, the area continues to serve as a testing ground for advanced weapons systems and aerospace technology.

The sheer size of the Woomera Prohibited Area means that vast sections remain unexplored by the public, and the full environmental impact of decades of weapons testing is still being assessed. Additionally, the area's role in contemporary military research remains classified, with only occasional glimpses provided when commercial satellite launches occur at the Woomera facility. The truth hidden here extends beyond current military capabilities to include the long-term consequences of Cold War nuclear testing that governments would prefer to forget.

North Sentinel Island

While not a government facility, North Sentinel Island in the Andaman Islands represents a different kind of secret—an isolated indigenous population that has violently rejected contact with the outside world. The Sentinelese people, estimated to number between 50 and 400 individuals, remain one of the last uncontacted tribes on Earth. The Indian government has established a three-mile exclusion zone around the island following several deadly encounters between the Sentinelese and outsiders.

The truth hidden on North Sentinel Island is fundamentally different from military secrets or government conspiracies. Here, the hidden truth involves a complete culture, language, and way of life that has remained virtually unchanged for tens of thousands of years. The Sentinelese represent a living window into humanity's distant past, yet their fierce independence means that their society, beliefs, and daily lives remain entirely unknown to anthropologists and the outside world.

This enforced isolation raises profound questions about our right to know versus their right to privacy and self-determination.

These secret areas scattered across the globe serve various purposes, from protecting national security to preserving indigenous autonomy. The truths they hide range from advanced military technology and intelligence gathering capabilities to historical records and continuity of government plans. While some secrecy serves legitimate purposes of national defense and diplomatic necessity, the culture of classification and restricted access inevitably breeds speculation and conspiracy theories.What remains clear is that as long as governments, institutions, and organizations maintain secret facilities and restricted areas, humanity will continue to wonder what truths are being concealed. In our age of satellites, drones, and digital surveillance, truly keeping secrets has become increasingly difficult, yet these locations persist in maintaining their mysteries. Whether the truths they hide justify such extensive secrecy, or whether greater transparency would better serve the public interest, remains a matter of ongoing debate in our complex modern world.

Mbappé's Madrid scoring surge sparks comparisons with Cristiano Ronaldo

Mbappé's prolific run at Madrid revives debate over whether he can eclipse Ronaldo

MADRID

Kylian Mbappé's remarkable scoring streak for Real Madrid has reignited comparisons with club legend Cristiano Ronaldo, with even senior figures at the Spanish giants wondering how far the French forward can go. After scoring his 23rd goal in 22 La Liga matches in Madrid's 2-0 win over Valencia, Mbappé once again underlined his growing influence in white.

Madrid coach Álvaro Arbeloa said Mbappé possesses the qualities required to follow in Ronaldo's footsteps, while cautioning that the Portuguese star's achievements remain extraordinary. "What Cristiano achieved seemed extraterrestrial, something impossible to match," Arbeloa said. "Mbappé has a long way to go because Cristiano was here for many years, but he has the conditions to follow in his footsteps. And if anyone can surpass him, it's Kylian."

Ronaldo, now 41 and playing in Saudi Arabia, represented Real Madrid from 2009 to 2018 and left as the club's all-time leading scorer with 451 goals in 438 competitive appearances. His longevity and consistency set benchmarks few have come close to matching. Mbappé, who joined Madrid last season at the age of 27, has wasted little time making his mark. In 2025, he scored 59 goals, equalling Ronaldo's club-record tally from 2013. At the time, Mbappé described Ronaldo as his "idol" and "the best player in the history of Real Madrid". The Frenchman has begun 2026 in even more devastating fashion. He has nine goals in seven matches this year, compared to the 11 games he needed to reach the same tally last season. Overall, Mbappé has 43 goals in 35 appearances for club and country this term."It's a great fortune because right now he's the best player in the world with what he's proving game after game," Arbeloa said. The coach, a former Madrid defender, was a teammate of Ronaldo during his playing days at the club. Mbappé's teammate Aurélien Tchouaméni has also suggested that the forward has what it takes to chase down Ronaldo's records. Madrid, meanwhile, have won seven straight league matches and sit one point behind leaders Barcelona after 23 games, with a Champions League knockout tie against José Mourinho's Benfica looming next.

Joan Laporta steps down as Barcelona FC president, to seek re-election

Laporta resigns as Barcelona president to contest elections, triggering March 15 polls.

BARCELONA

Joan Laporta has stepped down as president of FC Barcelona to seek re-election, setting in motion a 35-day countdown to club elections scheduled for March 15. The club confirmed the development, in accordance with its statutes, which require a sitting president to resign before contesting a fresh mandate.

Laporta, who returned to office in March 2021 after securing 54 per cent of the vote, relinquishes the role after nearly five years at the helm. Barcelona vice-president Rafa Yuste will serve as acting president for the next three and a half months until a new board formally takes charge. If re-elected, Laporta is expected to resume office on July 1.

The 62-year-old lawyer is widely considered the frontrunner in the race and is set to renew his rivalry with Victor Font, who finished second in the previous election. Former club executive Xavier Vilajoana has also declared his candidacy, along with economist Marc Ciria, who will be contesting his first Barcelona presidential election.

Approximately 100,000 Barcelona members of legal age, each with at least one year of membership, are eligible to vote. As in 2021, the club said polling will be conducted across multiple venues to encourage greater participation. Voting stations will be set up at club facilities, in the Catalan provincial capitals of Girona, Tarragona and Lleida, as well as in Andorra la Vella.

Barcelona clarified that postal voting will not be permitted this time, noting that it was allowed only as an exceptional measure during the 2021 elections due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

More than 20,000 members had voted by post in that election.

Laporta's second tenure has coincided with a period of major transition. It began with Lionel Messi's departure to Paris Saint-Germain and has since seen the club regain domestic strength, defending La Liga and Copa del Rey titles while returning to European relevance with a Champions League semi-final appearance last season.

Off the field, Barcelona returned to the Camp Nou in November after a prolonged renovation, albeit with limited capacity and ongoing work. The comeback, coupled with the emergence of teenage star Lamine Yamal and the attacking philosophy of coach Hansi Flick, has fuelled renewed optimism among supporters ahead of the elections.

F1 Driver Kimi Antonelli Unharmed After Car Crash Close in San Marino

BRACKLEY

Formula 1 driver Kimi Antonelli emerged unhurt after being involved in a road accident near his home in San Marino, his Mercedes team confirmed on Tuesday. The incident involved no other vehicles and caused damage only to Antonelli's car.

In a statement, Mercedes said the young Italian driver promptly informed authorities after the crash. "We can confirm that Kimi was involved in a traffic accident on Saturday night close to his home in San Marino," the team said. "The police attended the scene after being called by Kimi. His was the only car involved and while his vehicle was damaged, Kimi was completely unhurt." It was reported that the crash involved a Mercedes supercar which struck a retaining wall along the San Marino Superstrada, a major roadway linking the microstate with neighbouring parts of Italy. According to the report, local authorities have opened an investigation to determine the cause of the accident, though no injuries were reported.

Antonelli, widely regarded as one of Italy's most promising young motorsport talents, has been closely watched as part of Mercedes' future plans in Formula 1. The team's reassurance regarding his condition is expected to ease concerns as preparations continue for the upcoming season.

The timing of the incident comes amid ongoing pre-season activities, with Formula 1 testing set to resume on Wednesday in Bahrain. Mercedes did not indicate whether the accident would have any impact on Antonelli's immediate schedule, suggesting that the focus remains firmly on track preparations.

Italy's historic T20 World Cup debut offers hope amid football's ongoing struggles

Italy cricket captain Madsen hopes T20 WC entry can inspire struggling football team

KOLKATA

Italy men's cricket captain Wayne Madsen hopes his team's maiden appearance at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup can provide inspiration to the country's celebrated yet struggling football team, which faces an uphill task to qualify for the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Speaking ahead of Italy's landmark debut against Scotland, Madsen said strong performances on the global cricket stage could lift sporting spirits back home.

Italy, four-time football world champions, have endured a difficult period in recent years. Since lifting the trophy in 2006, they exited early in the 2010 and 2014 editions and failed to qualify for the 2018 and 2022 tournaments.

Their 2026 campaign has also faltered, with Italy now relying on the playoffs after failing to top their qualifying group and suffering a heavy defeat to Norway.

"Hopefully, we can inspire the football team to a World Cup as well," Madsen said. "If we can perform at a level that inspires them to get there, that would be something special."

Madsen said Italy's cricketers have prepared thoroughly for the ICC showpiece, with training camps and competitive matches helping the squad settle into tournament mode. "We had really good preparation in Dubai, played competitive games against Ireland and followed it up with solid practice matches," he said. "Now the challenge is taking that form into the pressure cooker of the World Cup."

Acknowledging that nerves are inevitable, Madsen stressed the importance of handling big-match pressure. "How we react on the big stage will be our biggest test. The opportunity to create something special is what we're focused on," he said.

Playing in India has added to the occasion for the Italian side. "It's a cricket-mad nation and just coming here to play is a huge honour," Madsen said, praising the warm reception they have received.

While cricket still remains a niche sport in Italy, Madsen believes interest will grow as World Cup matches are televised. He said the team hopes to leave a lasting legacy for the sport back home.

Italy head coach John Davison echoed those sentiments, noting that cricket's Olympic status could accelerate development in the country. With more than 100 clubs already in place, Davison said improved infrastructure and funding could help Italy build a stronger future in the sport.

Serena Williams Listed as Eligible to Return on Feb 22

LONDON

Serena Williams has been listed as eligible to return to professional tennis from February 22 by the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA), a move that has fuelled fresh speculation about a potential comeback by one of the sport's greatest champions. The 23-time Grand Slam singles winner, now 44, was included on the ITIA's register of players subject to anti-doping requirements, meaning she would be cleared to compete from that date if she chose to do so. However, it remains unclear whether Williams intends to resume her career on the women's tour.

Williams first raised eyebrows late last year when she quietly rejoined the tennis anti-doping testing pool, a step typically required of players planning to return to competition. At the time, she played down the significance of the move, insisting it did not signal an imminent comeback to a sport she dominated for nearly two decades.

Speculation intensified again last month when Williams appeared on a show and deflected direct questions about a possible return, offering no firm denial and leaving fans and commentators guessing about her future intentions.

The Women's Tennis Association (WTA) did not immediately respond to a request for comment outside normal business hours on Tuesday.

Williams last competed at the 2022 U.S. Open, where she was eliminated in the third round in what she described as an "evolution" away from tennis. She won her most recent Grand Slam singles title at the Australian Open in 2017, while pregnant with her daughter, a triumph widely regarded as one of the most remarkable achievements in the sport's history.

Since stepping away from competition, Williams has focused on business ventures, philanthropy and family life, while remaining a prominent figure in global sport and culture. Any return, even a limited one, would be a major moment for women's tennis, given her enduring influence and legacy.

Alonso Motivated but Still Unsure About F1 Future After 2026

JEDDAH

Two-time world champion Fernando Alonso said that he remains fully motivated ahead of the new Formula One season but has yet to decide whether it will be his last, as the sport prepares to enter a new technical era.

Speaking in Saudi Arabia ahead of pre-season testing in Bahrain, the 44-year-old Spaniard — the oldest driver on the grid — said he intends to enjoy every moment of the campaign after already making a record 425 grand prix starts.

Formula One begins a new engine cycle this season, with Aston Martin also starting afresh as a works team. Honda replaces Mercedes as the power unit supplier, while the season opens with the Australian Grand Prix on March 8. The AMR26 is the Silverstone-based team's first car shaped under the leadership of legendary designer Adrian Newey, with technical direction from former Ferrari man Enrico Cardile.

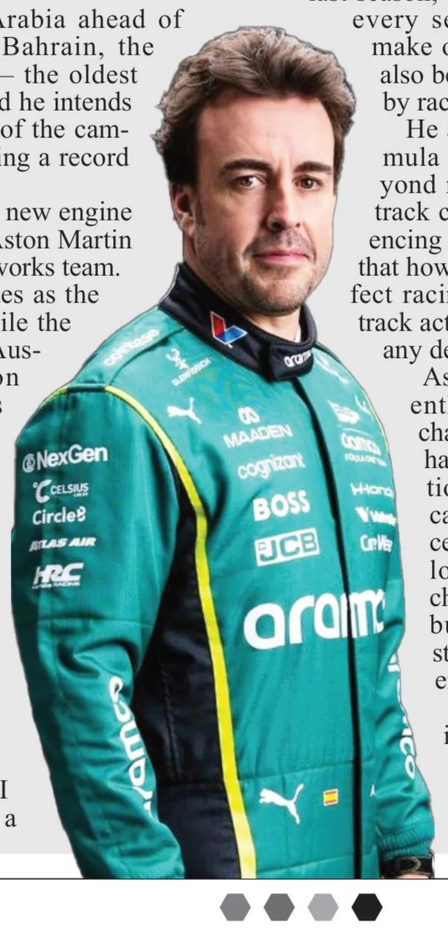
"This first year in this set of regulations will provide a lot of action and a lot of input and feedback from the driver," Alonso said. "I think it's going to be a very interesting season from a driver point of view." Alonso, who won his world titles with Renault in 2005 and 2006 and last claimed a race victory with Ferrari in 2013, said his future beyond 2026 remains open.

"I feel very proud to be part of this organisation. I don't know if it's going to be the last season, but my plan is to enjoy every second," he said. "If I make one more season, I will also be happy. I will do it race by race."

He acknowledged that Formula One's demands go beyond racing, with heavy off-track commitments also influencing longevity. Alonso added that how the new regulations affect racing, overtaking and on-track action would play a role in any decision about 2027.

Aston Martin finished seventh in the constructors' championship last year and have already faced a cautious start, with the new car appearing late at a recent shakedown in Barcelona. Alonso expects a challenging opening phase but is optimistic about stronger performances later in the season.

"To be in the top five in the constructors' championship will be a must, in a way," he said.



Indian tennis hopes set to rejuvenate from Dhakshineswar Suresh

BENGALURU

Indian tennis found a rare, stirring moment of renewal as Dhakshineswar Suresh emerged as the face of a memorable Davis Cup triumph that could signal brighter days ahead.

At the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium, scenes of unrestrained joy followed India's stunning 3-2 victory over world No. 6 Netherlands in the Qualifiers Round 1 tie, achieved after an exhausting eight-hour battle that kept Cubbon Park buzzing well past 11 pm.

Players embraced, families soaked in the emotion and fans refused to leave the stands, but amid the celebrations, Dhakshineswar remained strikingly composed. The 25-year-old, ranked 465th in the world, was the architect of India's win, contributing to all three decisive points — two singles and one doubles — a feat last achieved by Leander Paes in 2004.

What stood out was not just Dhakshineswar's booming serve, nimble footwork or confident volleying, but his calm under pressure.

Against higher-ranked opponents and in crunch moments, he trusted his game and delivered. His victory over world No. 88 Jesper De Jong marked his first win against a top-100 player.

Partnering Yuki Bhambri, he then won a crucial doubles rubber before sealing the tie with a straight-sets win over Guy Den Ouden, without facing a single break-point.

"I just wanted to give it out there for India and for myself," said Dhakshineswar, a Wake Forest University student, reflecting on the physical and mental toll of back-to-back marathon matches.

The Dutch, missing their top two players, may rue underestimating both India and an inspired home crowd that played a silent but decisive role. For India, this victory offers more than a result — it brings renewed belief.

From speculation to certainty: India-Pakistan clash finally locked in

After weeks of uncertainty, Pakistan confirm February 15 India clash in T20 World Cup

COLOMBO

The road to confirmation was anything but smooth. Uncertainty first crept in on January 24, when the International Cricket Council (ICC) replaced Bangladesh with Scotland in Group C after Bangladesh's request to shift matches out of India was rejected. The request was made citing security concerns following the removal of Mustafizur Rahman from the Kolkata Knight Riders squad at the directive of the BCCI.

The decision triggered strong reactions in Pakistan. Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Mohsin Naqvi termed the treatment of Bangladesh "unfair", while the country's interior minister indicated that a call on whether Pakistan would play India would be taken at the highest political level by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Talk of a possible boycott quickly gathered momentum.

A day later, on January 25, Pakistan announced their 15-member squad for the T20 World Cup, led by Salman Ali Agha and featuring senior batter Babar Azam. The squad announcement did little to calm speculation, with officials maintaining that the final decision rested with the Prime Minister.

On January 26, Naqvi met Shehbaz Sharif and stated publicly that all options were still open. He said the government would take a final call after further deliberations, keeping the cricketing and diplomatic implications in mind.

The situation took another turn on February 1, when the Pakistan government announced that the team would travel to Sri Lanka but would not play the India match. The PCB refrained from issuing a detailed statement, even as the ICC reportedly warned Pakistan of serious consequences, including possible sanctions.

Beyond sporting fallout, commercial concerns also loomed large. Broadcasters, particularly JioHotstar, were said to be worried about the financial impact of losing the tournament's biggest draw, with discussions around compensation reportedly surfacing.

Late on February 10, however, clarity finally emerged. The Pakistan government confirmed that the team would take the field against India, effectively closing the chapter on boycott fears and ensuring that the world's most watched cricket rivalry will play out in Colombo as scheduled.

Thank ICC for this amicable solution to Pak impasse: Rajeev Shukla

NEW DELHI

BCCI vice-president Rajeev Shukla on Tuesday lauded the International Cricket Council (ICC) for finding what he termed an "amicable and very good solution" that led to Pakistan withdrawing its boycott threat and agreeing to play India in the T20 World Cup 2026. The marquee Group A clash between the arch-rivals is now set to be played on February 15 at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo, as originally scheduled.

Rajeev Shukla praised ICC for resolving standoff, ensuring India-Pakistan World Cup clash

Speaking to reporters in New Delhi, Shukla thanked ICC chairman Jay Shah and the global body's office-bearers for their role in resolving the impasse. He said the decision came after detailed discussions involving the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), with the ICC taking into account the views and interests of all stakeholders.

"I would like to thank the ICC chairman and its office-bearers on behalf of the BCCI for finding a very good solution. After listening to all sides, this decision has been taken. It is very important for cricket," Shukla said. He added that the resolution would ensure the smooth conduct of the World Cup and enhance its overall success.

Emphasising the larger picture, Shukla noted that international cricket must take precedence over political or administrative disagreements. "Ultimately, cricket is most important for everyone. International cricket is important for everyone," he said, calling the outcome a significant achievement for the ICC.

Pakistan's decision to reverse its boycott stance followed sustained diplomatic and cricketing efforts. Bangladesh Cricket Board president Aminul Islam publicly urged Pakistan to play the match for the greater good of the sport. Sri Lanka President Anura Kumara Dissanayake also reportedly spoke to Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, encouraging him to allow the team to take the field.

The matter was further discussed after PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi briefed Sharif on his dialogue with the ICC. As part of the resolution, the ICC decided not to impose penalties on Bangladesh, which had earlier been removed from the tournament after refusing to play matches in India citing security concerns. Pakistan's initial boycott call had been made in solidarity with Bangladesh following its replacement by Scotland. With the issue now settled, the focus shifts back to cricket, with fans set to witness the high-voltage India-Pakistan encounter in Colombo.

ICC decided against penalising Bangladesh after dialogue amid broader South Asia cricket impasse

ICC not to sanction Bangladesh for refusal to play T20 WC in India

DUBAI

The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced that it will not impose any financial, sporting or administrative sanctions on the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) for refusing to play its T20 World Cup 2026 matches in India. The decision was taken after extensive dialogue with the BCB and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), the world body said in a statement.

Bangladesh had declined to travel to India for the global tournament citing security concerns and were subsequently replaced by Scotland. Pakistan later announced a boycott of its February 15 match against India in solidarity with Bangladesh, triggering a wider crisis for the tournament before the issue was eventually resolved.

"It is agreed that no financial, sporting or administrative penalty will be imposed on Bangladesh Cricket Board in relation to the current matter," the ICC said, adding that the BCB retains the right to approach the Dispute Resolution Committee under existing regulations if it chooses to do so. The ICC stressed that its approach was guided by principles of neutrality and fairness, with an emphasis on facilitation rather than punishment.

As part of the broader understanding reached during discussions, the ICC also confirmed that Bangladesh will host an ICC event between 2028 and 2031, subject to standard hosting processes and operational requirements. The move, the ICC said, reflects confidence in Bangladesh's capabilities as a host nation and reinforces its commitment to developing cricket across its membership.

ICC chief executive Sanjog Gupta described Bangladesh's absence from the T20 World Cup as "regrettable" but said it would not affect the ICC's long-term commitment to the country. He emphasised that Bangladesh remains a priority cricket ecosystem with over 200 million passionate fans and deserving of sustained investment.

The ICC further said it had concluded an open and constructive dialogue with both the PCB and the BCB, covering not only the immediate World Cup concerns but also the broader future of cricket in South Asia.

Reaffirming Bangladesh's status as a valued Full Member, the ICC said all stakeholders remained committed to cooperation and continued engagement to protect the integrity of the game and preserve unity within the global cricket fraternity.

FIH Pro League: India hopes for a winning start to a crucial year

ROURKELA

Selection debates and off-field issues may have dominated headlines in recent weeks, but the Indian men's hockey team will look to shift focus back to the field when it opens its international season in the FIH Pro League at the Birsa Munda Stadium here on Wednesday. Coach Craig Fulton and his squad will be keen to draw a line under the distractions and begin a pivotal year on a positive note.

India face a stern test in their opener against Belgium, with the World Cup just six months away shaping the approach of all competing sides.

For India, the spotlight will be firmly on young players such as Amandeep Lakra, Rosan Kujur and Manmeet Singh, who have earned their places after impressive performances in the Hockey India League and the Junior World Cup.

The trio represent the next generation Fulton hopes will add depth and competition to the squad as India balance immediate results with long-term planning.

"We are focused on building depth but at the same time getting closer to performance. You can't get both all the time," Fulton said on Monday. "Are we playing the strongest group right now? We have to spread a little bit because we need to give other players opportunities."

Belgium captain Arthur van Doren echoed those sentiments, admitting that the Pro League has become an important testing ground ahead of the World Cup.

T20 WC: Netherlands boost Super 8 hopes with 7-wicket win over Namibia

NEW DELHI

Bas de Leede struck a composed 72 as the Netherlands kept their Super 8 hopes alive in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 with a convincing seven-wicket victory over Namibia in a Group A encounter.

Producing a disciplined all-round display, the Dutch first restricted Namibia to a modest 156 for eight before overhauling the target comfortably with two overs to spare.

The win came as a timely boost for the Netherlands, who were looking to bounce back after letting a strong position slip in their previous loss to Pakistan.

Namibia, playing their first match of the tournament, showed signs of rust after a long gap in competitive cricket.

Put in to bat, they struggled for momentum early as Logan van Beek (2/13) and Aryan Dutt (1/13) kept things tight with the new ball.

Dutt drew first blood by luring Nikolaas Davin Steenkamp out of his crease for a sharp stumping by skipper Scott Edwards.

A steady 50-run stand between Jan Frylinck (30) and Jan Nicol Loftie-Eaton (42) helped Namibia recover through the middle overs, while JJ Smit added late impetus with a brisk 22.

However, timely strikes by van Beek ensured Namibia could not capitalise, and the African side finished with a total that always looked slightly below par on a good batting surface.

In reply, the Netherlands lost Max O'Dowd early but Mochale Levitt (28) provided a brisk start during the powerplay.

Colin Ackermann (32) then joined de Leede to stabilise the innings, rotating the strike effectively and punishing loose deliveries.

De Leede anchored the chase with maturity, mixing caution with aggression in his 48-ball knock that included nine boundaries, four of them sixes.

With the result firmly in hand, Edwards chipped in with an unbeaten 18 to seal the chase as the Netherlands reached 159 for three in 18 overs. The Netherlands next face the USA in Chennai on February 13, while Namibia will be up against hosts India at the same venue on February 12.

It's been a huge learning curve for me as an organiser, feels Sharath Kamal

CHENNAI

Former India No.1 Sharath Kamal admits that life after competitive table tennis has brought fresh challenges, but also renewed excitement, as he steps into the role of an organiser and administrator. The 43-year-old, who played his farewell international match at the WTT Star Contender in Chennai in March last year, says the transition has been a "huge learning curve".

Since hanging up his international boots, Sharath has remained deeply connected to the sport. He was elected to the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) Athletes' Commission and also serves on the Indian Olympic Association's Athletes' Commission, roles that have given him a broader perspective on the game beyond the playing arena.

At present, Sharath is focused on overseeing preparations for the WTT Star Contender, scheduled to be held from February 10 at the Tamil Nadu Physical Education and Sports University (TNPESU) campus here. The matches will be played at the SDAT-High Performance Table Tennis Centre located within the university premises, a facility closely associated with his academy.

As the Advisory Director of the High-Performance Centre, Sharath is eager to present the venue to players, officials and fans alike. "I miss the competition as a player. But as an organiser, it's been a huge learning curve," Sharath told, reflecting on his evolving role in the sport.

Acknowledging the academy's location at Melakottaiyur, over 40 kilometres from the city centre, Sharath said entry for spectators will be free to encourage attendance.

"We want more people to come and watch our facility, which has a seating capacity of around 700," he said, adding that World Table Tennis officials have been pleased with the arrangements so far.

"They are keen to see how an academy that has largely been used for training will hold up as a tournament venue," Sharath noted.

Looking ahead, he revealed plans to identify young talent for the academy's residential programme. Sharath said the selection process will soon begin to shortlist 15 paddlers in the 11–17 age group, underlining his commitment to nurturing the next generation of Indian table tennis players.

'In prime years of career and want to make most out of it': Manush

CHENNAI

Indian paddler Manush Shah believes he is entering the most important phase of his career and is determined to maximise it by competing strongly across multiple categories while carefully managing his fitness and workload. The 25-year-old from Baroda enjoyed a breakthrough 2025 and is now focused on sustaining that momentum as he builds towards the Asian Games. Last year proved memorable for Manush as he made significant strides in men's singles, doubles and team events. The standout moment came when he and mixed doubles partner Diya Chitale reached the WTT Finals in Hong Kong, becoming the first Indian pair to break into the top eight and qualify for the season-ending event. He added to that success earlier this year by winning the WTT Feeder in Vadodara, a special achievement on home soil. However, playing across categories has brought its own challenges. "Honestly, that's the most difficult part of my journey at the moment," Manush said. "When I play an international tournament, I normally have three events — men's singles, men's doubles and mixed doubles — to focus on, while also balancing domestic commitments."

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